MARVEL

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

ONE MORE DAY

STRACZYNSKI • QUESADA

AFTERWORD BY STAN LEE

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WHAT WOULD YOU DO...?

If the dearest person in your life, the one to whom you owe your entire world, was near death in a hospital bed, the victim of a bullet aimed at your heart but that pierced hers instead?

What would you do if this were simply the latest in a series of tragedies — the most recent example of the misery, madness and even murder — to befall those closest to you?

What would you do if this all had happened because of who you are, what you stand for and the life you were destined to lead?

What would you do if you had the power to save her, but at a price that may be more than you can bear to pay?

What would you do if you were Spider-Man...and you only had One More Day?

MARVEL

Collecting Amazing Spider-Man #544-545, Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #24 and Sensational Spider-Man #41 — the event that is the culmination of a lifetime of Spider-Man stories — brought to you by writer J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI (TV's Babylon 5, Thor) and artist JOE QUESADA (Daredevil: Father).

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544
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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

WHAT WOULD YOU DO...

IF YOU ONLY HAD...

ONE MORE DAY?!

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

ONE MORE DAY
PART 1 OF 4

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SPIDER-MAN: ONE MORE DAY

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #544

PART 1 of 4

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PUBLISHER: Dan Buckley

TUNE YOUR EAR TO THE FREQUENCY OF DESPAIR, AND CROSS-REFERENCE BY THE LONGITUDE AND LATITUDE OF A HEART IN AGONY.

LISTEN.

LISTEN.

IT'S MY FAULT.

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE REVEALED MY IDENTITY TO THE WORLD. NEVER SHOULD HAVE LEFT MAY AND MJ ALONE.

WE SHOULD HAVE SKIPPED TOWN, LEFT THE STATE, LEFT THE COUNTRY, LEFT THE PLANET, GONE ANYWHERE.

ANYWHERE THEY COULD NOT FIND US.

BUT WE DIDN'T.

AND WHEN THE KINGPIN SENT SOMEONE TO KILL ME, MAY TOOK THE BULLET.

AND NOW SHE'S DYING.

IT SHOULD BE ME ON THE TABLE, NOT HER.

MY FAULT.

I'D GIVE ANYTHING, DO ANYTHING, TO BRING HER BACK FROM THE EDGE. TO HAVE JUST ONE MORE DAY WITH HER.

WORLDS TURN ON SUCH THOUGHTS.

BECAUSE THE UNIVERSE HEARS THEM.

THE ONLY QUESTION IS...

...WHETHER OR NOT THIS TIME, THE UNIVERSE WILL ACTUALLY **LISTEN.**

A FEW DAYS AGO, SHE WAS SMILING, AND TALKING, AND--

THEN SHE WAS ATTACKED. BECAUSE NOW EVERYONE KNOWS WHO I AM...AND AUNT MAY BECAME A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY.

IT'S MY FAULT THAT SHE'S LYING THERE.

MY FAULT THAT SHE'S DYING.

MY FAULT.

SORRY, IT'S BEEN QUITE A NIGHT OUT THERE...

SPIDER-MAN
ONE MORE DAY
PART 1

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI	JOE QUESADA	DANNY MIKI	RICHARD ISANOVE	CHRIS ELIOPOULOS	DANIEL KETCHUM	AXEL ALONSO	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY
WRITER	PENCILER	INKER	COLORIST	LETTERER	ASST. EDITOR	EDITOR	EDITOR IN CHIEF	PUBLISHER

...THE EMERGENCY ROOM IS MAXED OUT AND WE'VE ALL HAD TO PULL DOUBLE SHIFTS.

ANYWAY, I'M DOCTOR FINE, I'VE BEEN ASSIGNED TO REVIEW THE CASE OF YOUR AUNT--

--MAY MORGAN. SO YOU ARE...

PETER MORGAN.

HER NEPHEW.

RIGHT.

SHE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE HER NAME TO CALL HER OWN. CHECKING HER IN UNDER A FALSE NAME WAS THE ONLY WAY TO HELP MAKE SURE NOBODY FINISHES THE JOB. CAN'T DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT CONNECT HER TO ME.

AND SINCE I WENT UP AGAINST TONY ON FORCED SUPER HERO REGISTRATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT, I'M ON THE RUN FROM EVERYONE NOW. NO MONEY, A FAKE I.D.--

HMM... THAT'S ODD...

SAYS HERE SHE WAS ADMITTED WITHOUT ANY KIND OF I.D....NO DRIVER'S LICENSE, LIFE OR HEALTH INSURANCE--

SHE...WE LEFT ALL THAT AT HOME, IN THE RUSH TO GET HER HERE.

Um, HMM...

SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY INSURANCE, DOES SHE?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, WHAT'S ALL THAT GOT TO DO WITH--

LOOK, I'M NOT AN ADMINISTRATOR, I DON'T GET INTO BILLING OPTIONS...I'M JUST TRYING TO *HELP* YOU BECAUSE--

OBVIOUSLY, WE'RE GOING TO DO ALL WE CAN TO MAKE YOUR AUNT COMFORTABLE. BUT THE HOSPITAL'S RESOURCES ARE THIN ON THE BEST OF DAYS, AND TODAY--

--WELL, UNLESS THEY CAN GET SOME KIND OF INDICATION OF ABILITY TO PAY, SHE'LL HAVE TO BE MOVED INTO THE CHARITY CARE WARD, UNLESS MEDICARE OR THE WELFARE DEPARTMENT CAN ARRANGE SOME KIND OF--

WELFARE...?

CHARITY WARD?

THIS IS MY *AUNT!*

PETER--

SHE IS *NOT* A *CHARITY CASE!*

YOU JUST TRY TO MOVE HER INTO THAT PLACE AND I'LL--

MR. ... MORGAN, WAS IT?

YOUR AUNT... DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE SHE IS. WE'RE BARELY PICKING UP BRAIN FUNCTION, JUST SYNAPTIC ECHOES. SHE COULD BE HERE, OR IN A ROOM AT THE RITZ HOTEL, OR--

I'M SORRY.

IF YOU HAD SOME KIND OF HEALTH INSURANCE, THAT WOULD BE ONE THING. A BOTTOMLESS CHECKBOOK WOULD BE EVEN BETTER.

I'M NOT SURE ANY OF THE BIG-TICKET TREATMENTS WOULD HELP HER IN ANY EVENT. IN THE END, THEY'D END UP BANKRUPTING YOU, AND I DON'T THINK SHE'D WANT THAT.

PETER...I HAVE SOME THINGS IN THE OLD PLACE... I CAN TRY TO GO BACK, WE CAN SELL THEM--

NO...YOU'LL BE SEEN...WE CAN'T RISK IT.

WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING--

I KNOW...AND I'M GOING TO.

I'LL BE BACK AS FAST AS I CAN, MJ. I NEED YOU TO STAY HERE. DON'T LET THEM TOUCH HER... DON'T LET THEM MOVE HER TO THAT PLACE--

THEY'LL HAVE TO COME THROUGH ME FIRST.

EXCUSE ME... WHERE ARE YOU *GOING?*

TO PAY A VISIT TO SOMEBODY WITH A BOTTOMLESS CHECKBOOK.

JUST A MINUTE--
WHAT?
I JUST... WANTED TO SAY I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FEELING AND--
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M FEELING.
OH, I THINK I DO.
I HAD AN UNCLE WHO ALMOST DIED TWO YEARS AGO...HE WAS IN AN ACCIDENT AND--
AND WHAT?
AND SPIDER-MAN SAVED HIM.
I MADE A PROMISE THAT IF I EVER HAD THE CHANCE TO RETURN THE FAVOR, I WOULD.
SPIDER-MAN UNMASKED!
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HIDE HER... BUT THE HOSPITAL NEEDS WHAT THE HOSPITAL NEEDS. I CAN'T CHANGE THAT.
WITHOUT INSURANCE, WITHOUT MONEY, THEY'RE GOING TO ASK QUESTIONS, AND I...WON'T BE ABLE TO STALL FOREVER.
YOU WON'T HAVE TO.
I'LL MAKE *DAMNED* SURE OF IT.

I FIND IT STRANGE TO SWING OVER THE CITY WITHOUT A MASK...BUT WHAT'S THE POINT? MY FACE IS ALL OVER THE PLACE.

BESIDES, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR GAMES, NOT WITH AUNT MAY'S LIFE ON THE LINE.

AS MUCH AS THIS IS MY FAULT...IT'S *HIS*, TOO.

STARK'S.

TPTKTP

NO GO. HE'S CHANGED ALL THE ACCESS CODES TO STARK TOWER.

RRRPPP!

I DECIDE I DON'T CARE.

BREEEEEEEEEEEE

WHAT THE--

WHO WOULD BE STUPID ENOUGH TO--

COMPUTER... SWITCH TO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS.

UNABLE TO COMPLY. CAMERAS INOPERATIVE.

MOTION SENSORS.

INTRUDER MOVING QUICKLY TO SECURE AREA. ETA TWO MINUTES TEN SECONDS.

FFFF

PETER?!

WHAT'RE YOU--

IN ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE, I WOULD'VE RESPONDED WITH A SNAPPY COMEBACK.

I DON'T HAVE TIME.

SLITTCH

COMPUTER... ROUTE ALL POWER TO REPULSOR GLOVES!

CONFIRMED.

FWOOSH

ERRRHH!

HAVE YOU--

--COMPLETELY--

--LOST YOUR MIND? THAT LITTLE STUNT COULD'VE GOTTEN BOTH OF US KILLED.

WANTED TO MAKE SURE...YOU DIDN'T FLY OFF...BEFORE I WAS ***DONE*** WITH YOU. YOU'RE GONNA--

THE ONLY THING I'M GOING TO DO--

--IS PUT YOU UNDER ARREST.

YOU TURNED ON ME, PETER. NOT JUST ME, BUT YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE PENALTIES FOR THAT. NOW YOU HAVE TO PAY THEM.

YOU WERE A FOOL TO COME BACK, PETER.

YEAH? SO WHO'S THE BIGGER FOOL--

--ME, OR THE GUY WHO'S POINTING A REPULSOR GLOVE AT ME THAT'S TOO OVER-HEATED FROM BREAKING OUR FALL TO WORK?

YOU WILLING TO BET YOUR LIFE ON THAT, PETER?

YEAH.

FWNG!

UNI-BEAM. MAXIMUM POWER.

NOW.

NNNGGGHHH!!

CAN'T SEE...LIGHT'S BURNING MY EYES...LIKE THE SUN CAME UP... FIVE FEET IN FRONT OF MY FACE.

I LET GO WITH EVERYTHING I'VE GOT. EVER SINCE MY WEBBING WENT INTERNAL, I'VE WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I LET FLY AND DIDN'T HOLD ANYTHING BACK...

--JUST EMPTIED EVERYTHING I HAVE INSIDE ME UNTIL...UNTIL...

...UNTIL.

OH...

...WOW...

THIS ISN'T GOING TO WORK, PETER.

...SHUT UP...

IF IT'S NOT ME, IT'LL BE SOMEONE ELSE. YOU CAN'T RUN, YOU CAN'T HIDE, YOU--

KANG!

I SAID, SHUT UP!

...FACE...LET ME SEE YOUR FACE, DAMN YOU--

BZZZT BRRZZT

...HAPPY NOW? I--

LISTEN TO ME--

--BECAUSE IN TWO SECONDS--

LISTEN TO ME!

AUNT MAY IS DYING!

SHE--

SHE'S DYING AND IT'S YOUR FAULT!

I *TRUSTED* YOU! I LET YOU GET CLOSE TO ME...YOU WERE LIKE A *FATHER* TO ME!

I *TRUSTED* YOU WHEN YOU SAID I HAD TO EXPOSE MY IDENTITY! THAT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY! I KEPT IT SECRET TO *PROTECT* MAY, AND MJ, BUT *YOU SAID* THEY'D BE SAFE! *YOU SAID*--

--AND NOW...NOW SHE'S LYING IN A *HOSPITAL* BED... *DYING*...AND THEY'RE GOING TO STICK HER IN SOME DAMNED *CHARITY WARD*... BECAUSE I CAN'T *PAY* FOR IT...

...BECAUSE I'M ON THE *RUN*... BECAUSE SHE WAS *HURT* WHEN THEY CAME AFTER *ME* AND FOUND *HER*.

I...

I'M SORRY, PETER. I DIDN'T KNOW.

REPULSORS BACK ONLINE IN 70 SECONDS...69...68...

I DON'T *WANT* YOUR PITY. I DON'T *WANT* YOUR APOLOGIES.

I *WANT* YOU... TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

YOU'RE A FUGITIVE FROM THE LAW, PETER. I CAN'T HELP YOU.

NOT ME... HER.

TONY...WHATEVER YOUR PROBLEMS WITH ME, MAY IS INNOCENT. YOU LIKED HER. SHE WAS A FRIEND TO YOU. I *KNOW* THAT YOU CARED FOR HER ALL THE TIME SHE WAS LIVING IN THE TOWER.

I NEED TO MAKE SURE SHE HAS THE BEST CARE MONEY CAN BUY, WHILE I TRY TO FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP HER.

BECAUSE I'M *NOT* GOING TO LET HER DIE, TONY. I'M *NOT* GOING TO LET THAT HAPPEN. BUT IT'S... IT'S GOING TO TAKE *TIME*. SO I NEED TO *BUY* HER THAT TIME.

AND YOU'RE GOING TO *HELP* ME BUY HER THAT TIME, OR--

OR WHAT?

YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OPTIONS AND YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO MAKE THREATS, PETER. UNLIKE A LOT OF THE OTHERS STILL FIGHTING REGISTRATION, THE GOVERNMENT *KNOWS* WHO YOU ARE.

SO YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OPTIONS, AND YOU COULD PRETTY MUCH FORGET ABOUT ANY PROMISES YOU GOT OUT OF ME BY THREATS.

REPULSORS ONLINE.

THE *OR* WASN'T A THREAT, TONY.

THE *OR* WAS --

--*OR* ELSE MY AUNT IS GOING TO DIE IN SOME CHARITY WARD SOMEWHERE.

IS THAT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT, TONY?

IS IT?

NO.

BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO WITHOUT COMPLETELY COMPROMISING MY POSITION.

I'M SORRY.

SHRAPNEL

ANY DIRECT HELP I GAVE TO YOU COULD BE TRACKED BACK TO ME. I COULD BE HELD LIABLE FOR AIDING AND ABETTING A KNOWN CRIMINAL.

IT WOULD UNDERMINE EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN TRYING TO BUILD SINCE THE WAR.

THE STAKES ARE BIGGER THAN YOU, OR ME...OR EVEN MAY. I--

FWOOOOOSH!

--I'M SORRY, PETER.

I'LL LET YOU WALK AWAY THIS TIME OUT OF RESPECT FOR MAY, SO YOU CAN BE THERE FOR HER AT THE END.

BUT DON'T COME BACK.

BECAUSE NEXT TIME, I'M TAKING YOU IN. MAY OR NO MAY.

TONY... WAIT!

TONNNNYYYYYY!

DAMN IT... DAMN IT... DAMN IT...

KRRRRKKKK!

BZZZT BRRZZZT

DID YOU WISH ANYTHING PREPARED, SIR? A LATE SUPPER, OR--

NO...NO, JARVIS, I'M FINE. THAT'LL BE ALL.

OF COURSE, SIR.

ACTUALLY, JARVIS...THERE IS *ONE* THING...

"PETER...WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?"

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

FINE, MJ, I--

I'M FINE. HOW'S MAY?

UNCHANGED. STILL NO REAL BRAIN ACTIVITY. DR. FINE IS DOING WHAT HE CAN TO STALL, BUT UNLESS WE CAN PROVIDE INSURANCE OR ABILITY TO PAY, THERE'S NOTHING HE CAN DO BUT MOVE HER TO THE CHARITY WARD.

I CAN'T STAND IT, MJ. I CAN'T STAND THAT SHE WAS THERE FOR ME WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, BUT NOW I CAN'T BE THERE FOR HER WHEN SHE NEEDS ME.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, PETER. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

YES, THERE IS.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY, AND WE NEED SOME, FAST. SO I'LL GO OUT THERE AND GET IT.

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

PETER, NO...YOU CAN'T--

IT'S MAY, MJ. I'LL DO WHATEVER'S NECESSARY TO SAVE HER LIFE.

I'M *ALREADY* A WANTED CRIMINAL, SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? I'D SELL MY SOUL IF I THOUGHT IT WOULD HELP HER.

THAT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY.

JARVIS? WHAT'RE YOU--

IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT MY COUSIN MAY MORGAN, FROM BLACKPOOL, HAS BEEN ADMITTED INTO THIS HOSPITAL, AND I--

--I--

I...I'M SORRY, PETER, WHEN MASTER STARK TOLD ME THE NEWS, I THOUGHT I WOULD BE PREPARED, BUT--

I LOVE HER SO MUCH, AND WHEN I HEARD--

I KNOW, JARVIS...I KNOW.

AH...uhm...ANYWAY, AS I WAS SAYING, I GOT HERE AS SOON AS I HEARD THE NEWS. SHE WILL, OF COURSE, RECEIVE ONLY THE FINEST CARE.

THAT MAY BE A PROBLEM, SIR, YOU SEE--

MY PERSONAL ACCOUNT HAS JUST SEEN A DEPOSIT OF SLIGHTLY OVER TWO MILLION DOLLARS. I THINK THIS WILL COVER EVERYTHING, DON'T YOU?

I...OF COURSE.

NURSE, WOULD YOU ESCORT MR.--

JARVIS.

--MR. JARVIS TO ACCOUNTING?

OF COURSE.

RIGHT THIS WAY, SIR.

I'M NOT SURE HOW YOU PULLED THIS OFF, SON, BUT...WELL DONE.

THANKS... THOUGH I SUSPECT--

"--I WON'T BE ABLE TO GO BACK A SECOND TIME... FOR ANYTHING."

NOT NECESSARY. WE CAN MAKE HER LAST DAYS AS COMFORTABLE AS--

THEY'RE NOT HER LAST DAYS. WE'VE GOT HER STABILIZED, NOW I CAN--

SON... *LISTEN* TO ME.

YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT THE FACTS. IN HER CONDITION, AT HER AGE...THERE'S NO COMING BACK. THE HARDEST PART OF MY JOB IS MAKING FAMILY MEMBERS UNDERSTAND THAT THERE'S NOTHING MORE ANYONE CAN DO, THAT THEIR LOVED ONES ARE GOING TO DIE, BUT --

SORRY, I DON'T BUY IT.

SON, THERE'S NOTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO STOP HER FROM DYING.

MAYBE NOT IN THE WORLD YOU LIVE IN, DOC...BUT IN THE CROWD I HANG OUT WITH...I'LL *FIND* SOMEBODY.

COUNT ON IT.

C'MON, MJ.

I SEE THE LOOK ON HIS FACE AS WE LEAVE THE BUILDING. HE DOESN'T BELIEVE IT.

DOESN'T MATTER. IT'S NOT GOING TO STOP ME.

I WON'T STOP. I WON'T REST. I'LL KICK IN EVERY DOOR, TAKE ANY CHANCE, PAY ANY PRICE.

I'LL FIND A WAY TO SAVE AUNT MAY IF IT MEANS STORMING THE GATES OF HELL ITSELF.

I LOVE YOU.

I KNOW.

BE CAREFUL.

NOTHING'S GOING TO STOP ME FROM SAVING HER.

NOTHING.

To be continued...

SPIDER-MAN: ONE MORE DAY

To be continued in:
FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD
SPIDER-MAN #24

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24 OCT
ONE MORE DAY
PART 2 OF 4
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN
ATTENTION TRUE BELIEVER! IF YOU SHOULD READ BUT ONE COMIC THIS DECADE THIS ONE'S IT!
WHY HAS DOCTOR STRANGE DARED SUMMON THE HEINOUS HANDS OF DEATH?
WHO ARE THE NECROPHAGOUS NIGHTSTALKERS?
AND WHILE YOU TRY TO FIGURE ALL OF THAT OUT DEAR MARVELITE, REMEMBER THAT...
A LIFE HANGS IN THE BALANCE!!!
SO, FLIP OPEN THIS COVER, ONLY IF YOU DARE!
(HEY, YOU GONNA BUY THIS THING? THIS AIN'T NO LIBRARY!)

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24 OCT

FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN

ONE MORE DAY

PART 2 OF 4

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THANKS TO JARVIS, AUNT MAY IS BEING MOVED OUT OF THE CHARITY WARD AND INTO A PRIVATE ROOM.

THE BAD NEWS IS THAT SHE'S STILL DYING. SHE MIGHT LINGER FOR A FEW DAYS OR JUST A FEW HOURS. EITHER WAY, THE DOCTORS SAY SHE'S OUTSIDE ANYTHING MEDICAL SCIENCE CAN DO TO SAVE HER.

I REFUSE TO ACCEPT IT. THERE HAS TO BE A WAY. AND IF MEDICAL SCIENCE IS OUT OF OPTIONS, IF ONLY A MIRACLE CAN DO THE JOB--

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--THEN I NEED SOMEONE MIRACULOUS.

SPIDER-MAN
ONE MORE DAY PART 2
The Other Side of Darkness

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI	JOE QUESADA	DANNY MIKI	RICHARD ISANOVE	CHRIS ELIOPOULOS	DANIEL KETCHUM	AXEL ALONSO	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY
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JUST HOPE THE DOCTOR'S IN.

NO NEED TO RING THE DOORBELL, PETER. I FELT YOU COMING FROM SIX BLOCKS BACK.

I HAVE TO SEE YOU, DOC. IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

IT IS NEVER ANYTHING LESS THAT BRINGS SOMEONE TO MY DOOR.

STEP FORWARD, THEN, AND ENTER THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF STEPHEN STRANGE.

"--AND THE DOCTORS SAY THERE'S NOTHING THEY CAN DO--"

--BUT THERE HAS TO BE A WAY TO HELP HER. I'LL GO ANYWHERE, DO ANYTHING I HAVE TO, IF IT'LL SAVE HER LIFE. YOU'RE A SORCERER SUPREME. THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO.

LONG AGO, MY HANDS WERE SHATTERED IN AN ACCIDENT, RENDERED USELESS FOR SOMEONE WHO WISHED TO BE A DOCTOR, A SURGEON, A HEALER.

I SEARCHED THE WORLD FOR SOMEONE WHO COULD FIX THEM. MY QUEST TOOK ME TO THE HIMALAYAS, WHERE I MET THE MAN WHO I WOULD ONE DAY CALL MASTER.

"HE TOLD ME THAT THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT EVEN A SORCERER SUPREME CAN DO. HE COULD NOT FIX MY HANDS... BUT HE COULD GIVE ME A PURPOSE, AND THE CHANCE TO SAVE LIVES.

"HAD HE SIMPLY HEALED ME, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO ONE TO STAND BETWEEN THE FORCES OF DARK AND LIGHT WHEN INTERCESSION WAS MOST NEEDED."

IF YOU'RE SAYING THAT HER DEATH IS PART OF SOME BIGGER PLAN, FORGET IT.

FROM WHAT YOU SAY THE DOCTORS TOLD YOU, THERE'S NOTHING ANYONE CAN--

SHE'S NOT GOING TO DIE.

SHE'S *NOT*--

--GOING--

--TO *DIE.*

WE ALL DIE, PETER.

YEAH, BUT NOT LIKE THIS.

IF SHE GOES YEARS FROM NOW, OF OLD AGE, IN HER BED, THAT'S ONE THING--

WILL IT NOT BE JUST AS PAINFUL WHENEVER IT HAPPENS? WHY IS THAT DIFFERENT?

IT'S DIFFERENT BECAUSE IT WON'T BE MY FAULT!

SHE TOOK A BULLET INTENDED FOR ME, STEPHEN. IF I'D MOVED JUST A SECOND FASTER, IF I'D SEEN--

I CAN'T LET HER DIE LIKE THIS, NOT WHEN IT'S MY FAULT. I CAN'T LIVE WITH THAT. I CAN'T, I--

GOD...GOD... GOD....

FOR GOD'S SAKE, STEPHEN... HELP ME...PLEASE, HELP ME.

I SPOKE THE TRUTH WHEN I TOLD YOU THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO. I THINK THERE IS NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO. BUT YOU MUST KNOW FOR YOURSELF, AND YOU DO NOT HAVE LONG TO SEARCH-- ONLY DAYS, PERHAPS HOURS.

THE HANDS OF THE DEAD WERE CREATED FIFTEEN CENTURIES AGO. THEY ALLOW ONE TO ENTER THE TIDES OF SPACE AND TIME, TRAVEL THE WORLD IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, EVEN BE IN SEVERAL PLACES AT THE SAME TIME.

SPACE AND *TIME*? WHAT IF WE CAN GO BACK AND STOP HER FROM BEING SHOT OR--

NO. THE HANDS OFFER GREAT POWER, BUT ALSO GREAT TEMPTATION. SOME THINGS ARE NOT MEANT TO BE TOUCHED BY MORTALS.

SO I WILL INVOKE THEM ONLY ONCE, TO SEND YOU MANY PLACES IN *THIS* TIME, RATHER THAN INTO ANOTHER.

AUDITE MIHI ANCIENT PHASMATIS, QUOD SUCCURRO IS TURBATUS ANIMUS.

HEAR ME, ANCIENT SPIRITS, AND HELP THIS TROUBLED SOUL.

GO NOW... AND MAY YOU FIND WHAT YOU NEED.

AND SUDDENLY I'M EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE...HERE AND THERE, ALL AT ONCE...AND I TELL THEM MY STORY...ASK THEM MY QUESTION...AND THE ANSWER IS ALWAYS THE SAME...THERE IS NOTHING THEY CAN DO.

THOUGH I KNOW STEPHEN WOULD NOT APPROVE, I EVEN GO TO THOSE WHO I KNOW WOULD SEE ME DEAD...BECAUSE EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO HATE ME, THERE MUST STILL BE SOME WHO UNDERSTAND THE SIMPLE URGENCY OF "MY AUNT IS DYING."

THE ANSWER IS THE SAME.

ANSWER
E SAME.

WHOA... CAN BARELY STAND...

NO...NOT ONE OF THEM COULD DO ANYTHING.

THEN PERHAPS THAT IS WHAT YOU NEEDED TO HEAR.

AND SOMETHING ELSE.

I WILL GET YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK. YOU ARE NOT USED TO THE STRESS OF SUCH TRAVEL... ESPECIALLY AT A TIME SUCH AS THIS.

"THE HANDS OFFER GREAT POWER, BUT ALSO GREAT TEMPTATION. SOME THINGS ARE NOT MEANT TO BE TOUCHED BY MORTALS.

"SO I WILL INVOKE THEM ONLY ONCE, TO SEND YOU MANY PLACES IN *THIS* TIME, RATHER THAN INTO ANOTHER."

"THEY ALLOW ONE TO ENTER THE TIDES OF SPACE AND TIME.

THE CYCLE OF LIFE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE VERY CORE OF EXISTENCE, TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE UNIVERSE. TO FIGHT THAT CYCLE...IS TO FIGHT THE VERY FORCES OF CREATION ITSELF.

AND THAT POWER...IS NOT WITHIN MY GRASP. OR YOURS.

THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS CAN ONLY BE STRETCHED SO THIN BEFORE MIND AND BODY SNAP.

WERE YOU ABLE TO FIND WHAT YOU NEEDED?

I MAY NOT BE A SORCERER SUPREME, BUT THE DOC AND I HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON. EVEN AMATEUR SCIENTISTS HAVE TO LEARN CHEMISTRY AND BIOLOGY, AND BOTH OF THOSE REQUIRE ONE MORE LITTLE THING.

A MORE-THAN-PASSING FAMILIARITY WITH LATIN.

AUDITE MIHI ANCIENT PHASMATIS, QUOD SUCCURRO IS TURBATUS ANIMUS.

PETER... NO!

GIVE ME A CHANCE... JUST ONE CHANCE...TO GO BACK TO WHERE IT HAPPENED...AND SET IT RIGHT, PLEASE--

--PLEASE.

WHERE AM I? WHEN AM I? WHAT--

--AM I?

WAIT--

THERE HE IS. THAT'S HIM. THE ONE WHO SHOT MAY.

THERE THEY ARE... MAY AND MJ, RIGHT IN THE LINE OF FIRE. I SHOULD BE SHOWING UP ANY SECOND.

ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE. HAVE TO TAKE HIM OUT FAST, BEFORE--

WHAT THE--

--CAN'T TOUCH HIM, HE CAN'T EVEN FEEL ME.

THIS ISN'T FAIR...THERE HAS TO BE SOME WAY TO REACH HIM, TO STOP HIM. I CAN'T HAVE COME THIS FAR ONLY TO FAIL!

OUTSIDE...I CAN FEEL MY EARLIER SELF ARRIVING, WALKING TOWARD THE MOTEL. MAYBE I CAN FEEL IT BECAUSE WE'RE THE SAME PERSON, SEPARATED ONLY BY TIME. IF SO, MAYBE I CAN AT LEAST WARN MY EARLIER SELF TO STAY OUT OF THE ROOM.

HAVE TO TRY!

BREAKFAST 6 A.M.

I'M REMEMBERING THIS MOMENT, AS IT HAPPENED... I REMEMBER SUDDENLY HAVING A BAD FEELING I COULDN'T IDENTIFY. I DIDN'T HAVE THAT MEMORY UNTIL RIGHT NOW.

IT WAS ME, MUST HAVE BEEN ME, TRYING TO GET THROUGH, RIGHT NOW. MAYBE IT'S MY SPIDER-SENSE, PICKING UP ON MY PRESENCE...

THAT MEANS THERE'S A CHANCE, A CHANCE TO--

--NO!

WHATEVER THEY ARE, I CAN'T LET THEM STOP ME, CAN'T--

AAAGHHH!

NO GOOD...THEY CAN HURT ME BUT I CAN'T TOUCH THEM.

NO! STOP! YOU HAVE TO STOP! DON'T GO IN THERE!

BREAKFAST A.M.

NGGGGH!

NO...YOU WON'T STOP ME...YOU WON'T...

--YOU WON'T!

I'M COMING, AUNT MAY... I WON'T LET THEM HURT YOU, I WON'T, I WON'T--

SO HOW DID IT GO?

FINE, FINE, I--

LISTEN TO ME, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, LISTEN TO ME...HE'S GOING TO SHOOT...HE'S GOING TO FIRE ANY MOMENT, YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE, HAVE TO PROTECT THEM--

PETER? IS SOMETHING--

DON'T LET IT HAPPEN! DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN! YOU'VE GOT TO STOP IT!

SOMETHING'S... WRONG--

DOWN!

SPAK

NOOOOOOOOOOOO!

NO...NO... NO...

I CAN'T GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN...I CAN'T...

BY THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO--

--BEGONE!

THOSE WERE NIGHTWALKERS...THEY LIVE ON THE EDGES OF TIME AND SPACE, THEIR WHOLE EXISTENCE BEING TO PREVENT DESTINY FROM BEING CHANGED. ONLY A GREAT POWER CAN DEFY THEM.

...GREAT POWER...GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

...GET ME OUT OF HERE... PLEASE...

YOUR NON-MATERIAL SELF IS GRAVELY WOUNDED...YOU MAY DIE IF WE DO NOT ACT QUICKLY.

MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM CONTAINS THE MYSTIC ELEMENTS NEEDED TO HEAL YOU, BUT I CANNOT RISK GOING THERE AT A TIME WHEN I WAS PRESENT... THE WHOLE TIME-SPACE CONTINUUM COULD BE AT RISK IF I SAW MYSELF, AND LEARNED WHAT WAS COMING.

SO WE MUST GO EVEN FARTHER BACK IN TIME, TO A MOMENT WHEN I KNOW I WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE SANCTUM.

HOLD ON JUST A FEW MORE MINUTES, PETER.

IN ORDER TO USE THE ELEMENTS NEEDED TO RESTORE YOU, I HAVE RETURNED OUR BODIES TO PHYSICAL FORM INSIDE THIS ROOM. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO VENTURE OUT OR YOU WILL AGAIN BECOME INSUBSTANTIAL.

THIS WILL NOT TAKE LONG, BUT IT WILL HURT.

I WILL NOT DESCRIBE IT AS UNDESERVED.

I KNOW... I'M SORRY, STEPHEN, I'M--

NOK-NOK

SOMEONE AT THE DOOR...I SHOULD INVESTIGATE TO MAKE SURE WE ARE NOT DISTURBED.

DO NOT MOVE UNTIL MY RETURN.

YEAH...I THINK I CAN OBLIGE THAT.

HEAD SWIMMING... MINUTES PASSING... WHERE THE HELL IS HE? I CAN HEAR VOICES. WHAT IF HE'S IN TROUBLE?

THE VOICES... FAMILIAR...I CAN JUST MAKE THEM OUT--

OKAY, SO NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, WHEN DO WE GO AFTER HIM?

NO!

WE DON'T. YOU DO.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WE DON'T? I *MEAN*, YOU'RE LIKE THE SORCERER'S MONTHLY FOLDOUT FOR THE ASTRAL PLANE. YOU LIKE FUZZY ANIMALS AND SAVING WORLDS AND YOUR TURN-OFFS ARE RUDE PEOPLE AND GUYS WITH MOIST, GRABBY TENTACLES--

--WHICH IS *MOST* GUYS, NOW THAT I THINK OF IT--

I'M SORRY.

SEE **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #42** FOR THE REST OF THIS SCENE!

I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT I CANNOT MISS.

SURE YOU CAN. TELL 'EM YOU'RE BUSY. TELL 'EM YOU WENT OUT WITH AN OLD WAR BUDDY AND WE'RE COMPARING SCARS--

AN APPOINTMENT... WITH DEATH.

HAVE TO GET OUT THERE...STILL A CHANCE TO WARN MYSELF....

NO...I LOSE PHYSICALITY THE MOMENT I TOUCH ANYTHING OUTSIDE.

I HAVE TO FACE IT... THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO STOP IT. NOTHING...

...NOTHING.

I MUST GO NOW. DO NOT OPEN THIS DOOR AGAIN UNTIL I RETURN.

IF I RETURN AT ALL.

BOOM!

I DO NOT THINK WE WILL BE INTERRUPTED FURTHER.

THE HEALING HAS ALMOST RUN ITS COURSE.

SO HOW COME YOU CAN FIX ME UP, AND NOT MAY?

MAGICAL CURES FOR MAGICAL ILLS.

AND IT IS NOT YOUR TIME. JUST AS *THIS* IS NOT YOUR TIME. THE UNIVERSE CALLS US HOME WHEN IT IS TIME FOR US TO GO.

FOR YOUR AUNT, IT IS THAT TIME.

IT IS NOT FOR YOU, OR I, TO CHANGE SUCH THINGS, PETER. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THIS. JUST AS I HOPE YOU SEE NOW...TRULY SEE...THAT THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE TO PREVENT WHAT HAPPENED, EVEN WITH ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE AND ALL THE TOOLS OF SORCERY AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

YOU NEED NOT FEEL GUILTY FOR WHAT HAPPENED, PETER.

YEAH, WELL, THE DAY I ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT, I'LL BE SURE TO LET YOU KNOW.

COME, NOW... IT IS TIME FOR US TO GO, AND RETURN WHENCE WE CAME.

TO THE VERY MOMENT--

"--IN WHICH WE LEFT."

I KNOW YOU DESPAIR, PETER. BUT...CAN I MAKE A SUGGESTION? NOT AS A SORCERER, BUT AS A DOCTOR?

SURE... WHATEVER...

HOWEVER BADLY INJURED YOUR AUNT'S BODY, HER SPIRIT STILL RESIDES WITHIN. THOUGH SHE IS UNCONSCIOUS, YOUR WORDS CAN STILL BE HEARD BY HER.

WE ALL DIE, PETER. YOU, ME, AND THOSE WE LOVE MOST DEARLY. WE CANNOT CHANGE THAT. ALL WE CAN CONTROL...IS WHETHER OR NOT THOSE WE LOVE DIE ALONE.

I HAVE LOST MANY OF THOSE I LOVED...AND WHEN I THINK BACK ON THEM, I DO NOT REGRET THAT I LOVED THEM, ONLY THAT, IN SO MANY CASES, I WAS NOT THERE TO DO WHAT IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL.

I WAS NOT THERE TO SAY GOODBYE.

IF YOUR AUNT PASSED AWAY RIGHT NOW, THIS MOMENT, AND YOU WERE NOT THERE TO HOLD HER HAND, AND TELL HER YOU LOVED HER, AND LET THAT LOVE CARRY HER ACROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE...YOU WOULD REGRET IT EVERY DAY FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

STOP BLAMING YOURSELF FOR THE INEVITABLE. SAVOR THE TIME YOU HAD. GO TO YOUR AUNT, AND GIVE HER EVERY MOMENT OF YOUR LOVE.

THERE IS NO GREATER GIFT YOU CAN GIVE HER RIGHT NOW.

GOODBYE, PETER.

THOSE WERE NIGHTWALKERS...THEY LIVE ON THE EDGES OF TIME AND SPACE...

THEIR WHOLE EXISTENCE BEING TO PREVENT DESTINY FROM BEING CHANGED. ONLY A GREAT POWER CAN DEFY THEM.

WE ALL DIE, PETER. YOU, ME, AND THOSE WE LOVE MOST DEARLY. WE CANNOT CHANGE THAT.

HE WAS RIGHT. *YOU* CANNOT CHANGE THAT.

BUT I... CAN.

To be continued...

SPIDER-MAN:
ONE MORE DAY

FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN #24
PART 2 of 4

WRITER: J. Michael Straczynski

PENCILER: Joe Quesada

INKER: Danny Miki

COLORIST: Richard Isanove

LETTERER: Chris Eliopoulos

VARIANT COVER ARTIST: Marko Djurdjevic

PRODUCTION: Rich Ginter

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Daniel Ketchum

EDITOR: Axel Alonso

MARY JANE PROFILE

WRITERS: Jonathan Couper-Smartt, Mike Fichera & Peter Sanderson

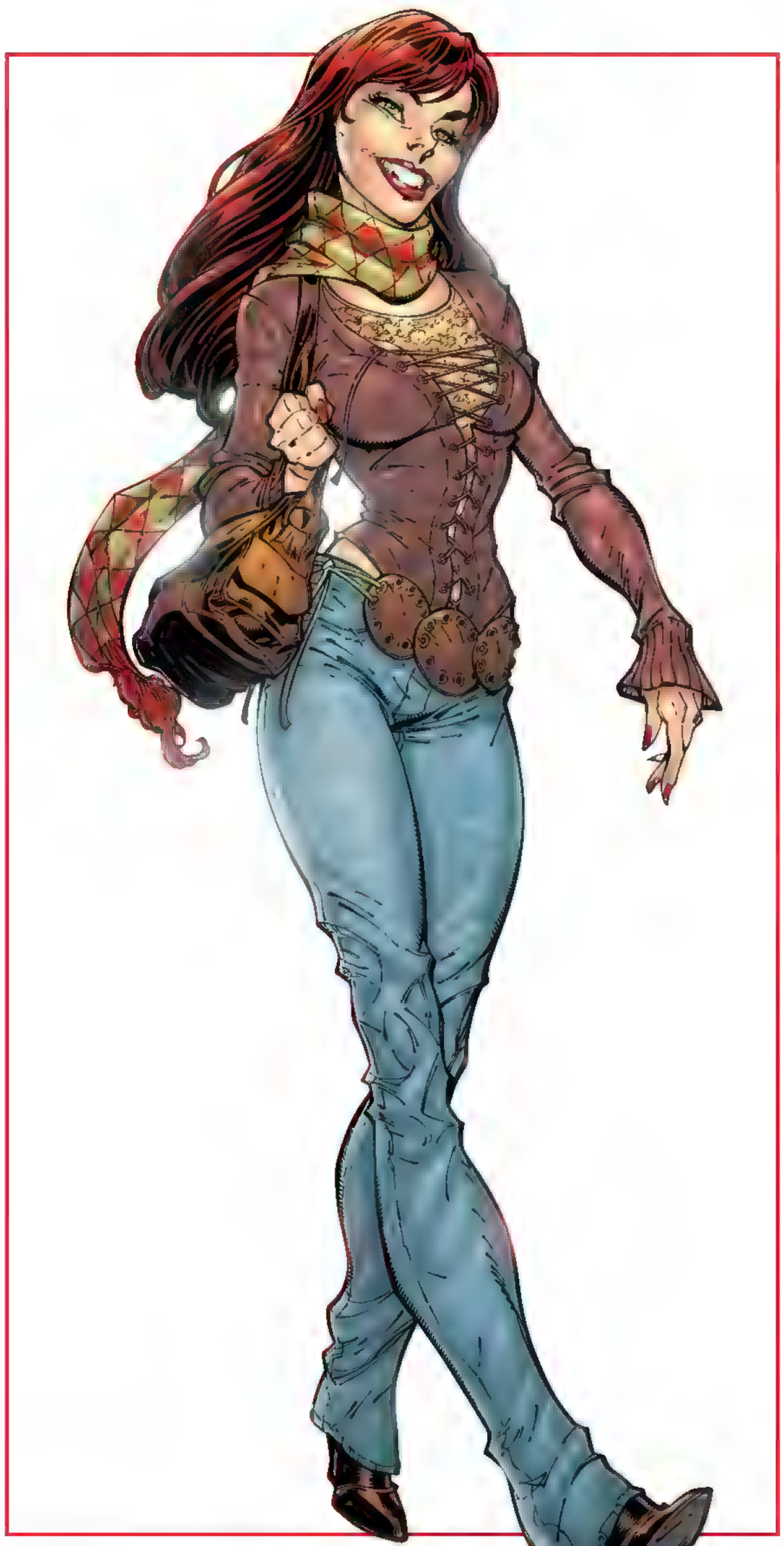
EDITOR: Cory Levine

EDITOR IN CHIEF: Joe Quesada

PUBLISHER: Dan Buckley

MARY JANE WATSON-PARKER

REAL NAME: Mary Jane Watson-Parker
ALIASES: "MJ," "Janie," Mary Morgan; formerly Mary Reilly, Crimson She-Devil
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Actress; former fashion model, star of daytime TV drama, professional dancer, waitress, fast food employee
CITIZENSHIP: U.S.A.
PLACE OF BIRTH: Montoursville, PA
KNOWN RELATIVES: Peter Parker (husband), May Parker (daughter, deceased), Philip Watson (father), Madeline Watson (mother, deceased), Gayle Watson-Byrnes (sister), Timothy Byrnes (ex-brother-in-law), Kevin and Tommy Byrnes (nephews), Anna May Watson (aunt), Judge Spencer Watson (uncle), Frank Brown (mother's cousin), Kristy Watson (cousin), Lou and Lorraine Watson (uncle and aunt, parents of Kristy), May Parker (aunt-in-law)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Actors' Equity Association, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Screen Actors Guild
EDUCATION: High school graduate, college studies (psychology major, incomplete)
FIRST APPEARANCE: (Partial) Amazing Spider-Man #25 (1965); (full) Amazing Spider-Man #42 (1966)



HISTORY: Mary Jane Watson's parents, Philip and Madeline Watson, met as students in college. Although Madeline wanted to move to New York City to pursue an acting career, she gave up this ambition to be with her husband, who took a teaching position at a small college in Montoursville, Pennsylvania. Mary Jane's sister, Gayle, was born about eighteen months after their marriage, and Mary Jane herself was born four years later. Philip became a popular college professor, while Madeline devoted herself to their children. When Philip began to have unrealistic visions of himself as the next great American novelist, their marriage unraveled. Philip was an alcoholic, and he unfairly blamed his children for his own shortcomings as a failed writer. Dragging his wife and children from college to college, he searched in vain for inspiration. The family's turmoil caused Gayle to turn inwards, seeking solace in ballet. Mary Jane began developing the extroverted fun-loving personality that she would cultivate for years to come. Her good humor was her means of compensating for and escaping from her deep unhappiness over the growing tension in her family. Eventually, Philip's frustrations boiled over, and he struck Gayle over the cost of her dancing lessons; Madeline had had enough. A few weeks later, as Philip received honors during a college awards ceremony, Madeline left home with her children. She received little from the divorce and was left to shuffle from one resentful relative to the next, with the exception of her ex-husband's older sister, Anna Watson, who lived in Forest Hills, New York.

Thirteen-year-old Mary Jane loved to visit her aunt. Anna introduced Mary Jane to her friend and neighbor, May Parker, whose nephew, Peter, was only a year older than Mary Jane. Mary Jane first saw Peter out of a window of Anna's house one autumn while he raked leaves.

Madeline uprooted her family again and settled in Pittsburgh, staying with her cousin, Frank Brown. A widower with three children of his own, Frank was harsh, but not violent, and at last the tortured family found some stability. Frank paid the bills and Madeline looked after the household. While Mary Jane broke hearts as a fourteen-year-old freshman, Gayle ignored her mother's warnings and married her high school sweetheart, football star and honors student Timothy Byrnes. Gayle and Timothy moved to Philadelphia after graduation. Timothy was nineteen when Gayle became pregnant. In Timothy's trapped eyes, Mary Jane saw the roots of the desperation that had destroyed her father. Mary Jane began performing in school theater productions and dreamed of becoming a famous actress on Broadway or in films. Her performance as Juliet in a school production of *Romeo and Juliet* was not a success, but she later did far better playing Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Mary Jane buried herself in acting, parties and the nation's newest celebrity sensation — Spider-Man. Mary Jane believed she and Spider-Man shared at least two things in common: a determination to enjoy life and a mask that hid their true faces.

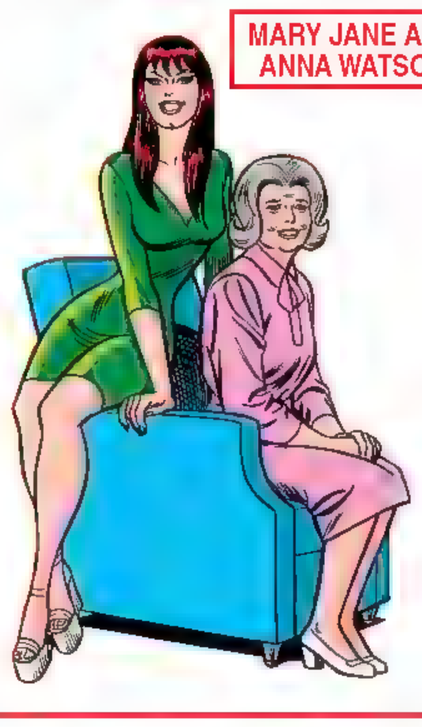
The following Thanksgiving break, Mary Jane went to stay with Aunt Anna. Next door, May Parker's husband, Ben, was murdered by a burglar. While Anna and Madeline took care of May, Mary Jane had little stomach for the misery of others. Watching from a window, Mary Jane saw the frantic Peter Parker run into his house; a minute later, she saw Spider-Man emerge from an upstairs window. Mary Jane immediately realized that Peter was Spider-Man, but she decided to keep the information to herself, unable to deal with the confused emotions the discovery awakened in her. Mary Jane fled into the night to dance and party.

May and Anna tried to set up a date between Peter and Mary Jane, who still had not actually been introduced to each other. May thought that Mary Jane had much in common with Peter and would make a good girlfriend for him. May even hoped that someday Peter would

Art by J. Scott Campbell

marry Mary Jane, but withheld telling Peter about Mary Jane's past, hoping they would have a first date. Peter, however, had already fallen in love with Daily Bugle secretary Betty Brant, and had gotten flirty overtures from his classmate, Liz Allan. He did not want any further romantic entanglements and, moreover, assumed that a girl his aunt wanted him to date would probably be dull and unattractive. Knowing Peter was Spider-Man, Mary Jane initially did not want to get involved with him and invented excuses to call off the date. She saw Spider-Man in action against the Radioactive Man in a natural history museum, and followed the fight as it moved to the Brooklyn Bridge, bewildered yet awestruck by the duality of shy Peter Parker.

One day Mary Jane visited the Parkers' house, where May hoped she would finally meet Peter, but he was absent, busy fighting the first of the Spider-Slayer robots. However, Betty Brant and Liz Allan dropped by the house and were astonished by the beauty of the girl they immediately regarded as their competition for Peter. However, Peter's romantic relationships with Betty and Liz came to an end, although he has remained a close friend of both. He began his college work at Empire State University, where he met and became attracted to fellow student Gwendolyne Stacy.



Art by John Romita, Sr.

Gayle and Timothy Byrnes had their first son. However, the stress that Timothy suffered while trying to support a family while attending college led to marital discord. Timothy left Gayle when she again became pregnant. Mary Jane and Madeline moved to Philadelphia to support Gayle and her boys. Mary Jane was pained by the family turmoil, escaping from her troubles by acting and partying.

Soon Madeline fell seriously ill. Mary Jane gave up her acting at school and took a series of after-school jobs to help support the family. However, Madeline finally died, and Mary Jane, terribly upset, abandoned her sister. She was determined not to sacrifice her dreams of happiness as Madeline, Gayle, and Timothy had done. When she arrived at Anna's house, Anna invited May and Peter over for Sunday dinner so she could finally meet the boy next door. Mary Jane spent that week getting a job as a waitress and dancer, and making a deposit on a small studio apartment in Manhattan's East Village. The following Sunday, though expecting to meet a dowdy girl, Peter was stunned by Mary Jane's beauty and charm. Like she said when first greeting Peter, he had "hit the jackpot." Remembering a bookish, bespectacled nerd, Mary Jane never imagined the confident young college student Peter had become. Perhaps realizing that Peter would want to go after the Rhino as Spider-Man, Mary Jane suggested they ride his new motorcycle to see if they could spot the escaped criminal. Peter agreed, but after they found the Rhino, Peter left her, claming he had to take pictures for the Daily Bugle. When Spider-Man turned up moments later, Mary Jane bit her tongue and feigned surprise at the coincidence.

Mary Jane became part of Peter's circle of friends — joining Harry Osborn, Gwen Stacy and Flash Thompson. Gwen was playfully jealous of Mary Jane dating Peter. Shortly thereafter, Mary Jane went on a date with Harry Osborn. Later still, Osborn arranged a double-date — himself with Gwen, Peter with Mary Jane — that was interrupted by an attack by Kraven the Hunter. Though he was strongly attracted to Mary Jane, Peter found himself more interested in Gwen. Gwen and Mary Jane competed for Peter for some time, but Peter and Gwen continued to grow closer together.

Mary Jane was hired as a dancer at a New York City dance club, the Gloom Room, which was secretly a front for the crimelord, the Kingpin. During a gunfight there, a criminal tried to use Mary Jane as a shield, but Spider-Man rescued her. This was Mary Jane's first contact with Peter in his Spider-Man guise.

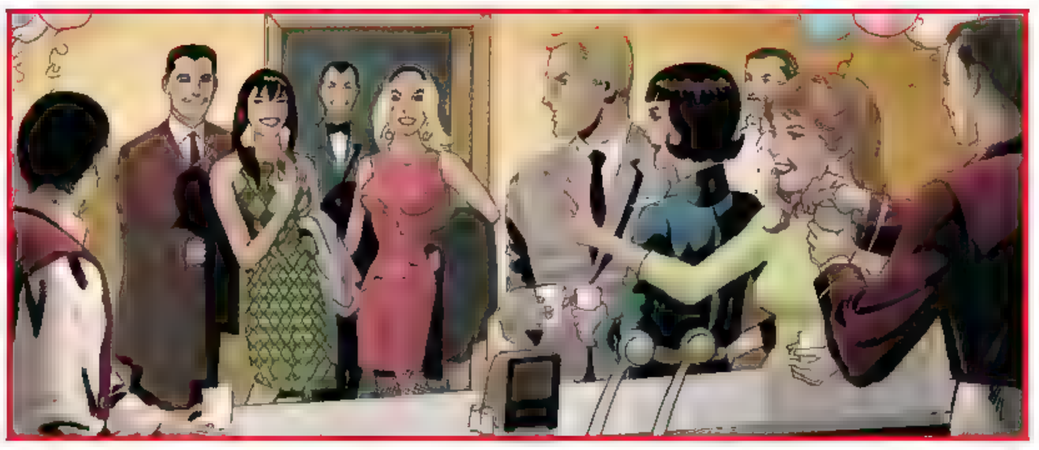
During a temporary split between Peter and Gwen, Mary Jane tried to become Peter's girlfriend again. However, Peter was deeply in love with Gwen and turned Mary Jane down (to her surprise). Gwen and Peter resumed their relationship, which grew increasingly stronger. Mary Jane went back to being Harry's girlfriend, but still flirted with Peter.

Overwhelmed after years of feeling like a disappointment to his derisive and condescending father, compounded by Mary Jane's perpetual flirting with Peter, Harry became addicted to drugs; while under the drugs' influence, Harry offered to forgive Mary Jane for her advances on Peter, but she proclaimed herself an unattached young woman. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the teenagers, Gwen had become pregnant after a brief affair with Norman, and secretly gave birth to twins in Europe after an unusually rapid gestation period. After Mary Jane overheard Gwen arguing with Norman for custody of the children, Gwen confided in her, but made her promise to keep silent; Mary Jane carried Gwen's secret for many years until the twins later resurfaced as rapidly aging teenagers with a vendetta against Spider-Man. Amnesiac Norman, reverting to his Green Goblin persona, remembered knowing Peter's secret identity and killed Gwen atop the Brooklyn Bridge. Mary Jane waited for Peter in his apartment. Anguished, Peter yelled at her to leave, rejecting her sympathy, assuming she would act true to form and flee when times were difficult; however, reaching a milestone in her maturity, she stayed and the two grieved over the loss of Gwen together. At that moment, Mary Jane first knew she was in love with Peter.

Mary Jane broke up with Harry Osborn, who was becoming increasingly unstable after witnessing his father's apparent death. Despite her feelings for Peter, she claimed she was tired of Peter's depression, and decided not to become further involved with him. Subsequently, Peter, as Spider-Man, rescued Mary Jane from the new Vulture (Clifton Shallot). At a party, Mary Jane feigned indifference toward Peter. But later that night she said that she did not want to be in love with Peter because she liked him too much. Presumably, Mary Jane feared being emotionally hurt in a serious relationship with Peter as she had been hurt in relationships with members of her family.

Nevertheless, Mary Jane and Peter continued seeing each other. Harry Osborn went mad, becoming the new Green Goblin, and set off a bomb that nearly killed Mary Jane and Peter. Mary Jane was hospitalized, and Peter was greatly concerned about her. Harry, as the Goblin, later captured Mary Jane in an attempt to strike at Spider-Man, but she was released unharmed.

Just before he left on a trip to Europe, Peter exchanged a long, passionate kiss with Mary Jane at the airport that was a turning point



Art by Salvador Larroca

in their relationship. Mary Jane realized that their relationship was becoming serious and was astonished to discover the depth of her own feelings for Peter.

After his return, it seemed for a brief while that Mary Jane might lose Peter to a young woman who was a lookalike for the deceased Gwen Stacy — Gwen's clone, created by her college professor, Miles Warren (the Jackal). May Parker, still determined to pair Mary Jane and Peter, urged Mary Jane to take the initiative in winning Peter back. Spider-Man was forced to fight his own clone. When the battle was over, Peter was unsure if he was a clone until he recognized his love for Mary Jane (the clone had been implanted with memories during a time when Peter was in love with Gwen). After Peter and Gwen's clone agreed to part, Peter again found Mary Jane waiting for him at his apartment and was overjoyed to see her. Even after he had a second chance with "Gwen," Peter realized that he was in love with Mary Jane and even hinted to her shortly afterwards that he wanted to marry her.

Sometime later, Mary Jane became angry at Peter when he left her on a date so he could investigate a killing as Spider-Man. She retaliated by going on a date with Flash Thompson. Mary Jane told Peter that she was uncomfortable having a serious relationship and didn't like the way he was continually leaving her to take photographs for the Bugle. (Of course, she knew he was actually leaving to go into action as Spider-Man, thus risking his life.)

However, Peter and Mary Jane grew close once more, and when she helped Liz Allan choose a wedding gown for her upcoming marriage to the recovered Harry Osborn, Mary Jane wondered aloud what Peter would think of seeing her wearing one.

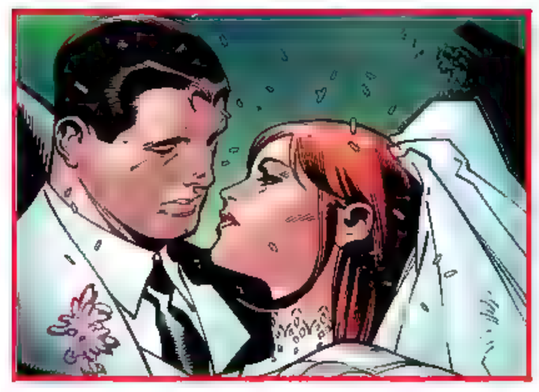
Peter eventually proposed to Mary Jane — but she declined, claiming she wasn't the sort of girl who could be happy with just one man. Peter and Mary Jane remained friends, but she was upset by his sudden departures on two of their dates and began avoiding him. She briefly worked at another dance club called Studio 52. Uncomfortable being around Peter, Mary Jane dropped out of college and left New York to further her modeling career in Florida, where Anna had moved. Peter dated several women during her absence, including Felicia Hardy (the Black Cat), with whom he shared a particularly tempestuous relationship.

Mary Jane returned to New York, and after a while found steady work as a fashion model for Roderick Kingsley (secretly the Hobgoblin). Various friends tried to revive the romance between Peter and Mary Jane, but both of them resisted. Mary Jane dated a number of actors and men in the fashion industry, and Peter was pleased to have her just as a friend.

One day, one of Spider-Man's adversaries, the Puma, used his superhuman senses to track Spider-Man down to Peter Parker's apartment while Mary Jane was there. Peter pushed her out of the apartment just before the Puma broke in. Torn with worry, Mary Jane could hear the battle between Spider-Man and the Puma through the apartment's locked door. After the battle was over, Mary Jane went to Peter and told him she could not longer bear worrying about the dangers he put himself in and told him she knew he was Spider-Man. Still, Mary Jane had no actual proof of Peter's double identity until the Black Cat, who was known to be Spider-Man's companion, arrived at the apartment. In tears, Mary Jane hurriedly left.

Mary Jane was about to leave New York but decided she would not run away from Peter. Returning to him, she told him her life story for the first time, and Peter decided he could trust her with his secret. Peter and Mary Jane chose to stay together as close friends and confidantes, while ruling out the possibility of becoming romantically involved once more.

At long last Peter had a friend from whom he felt he did not have to hide his secret life as Spider-Man. Mary Jane continued to worry intensely about Peter risking his life, but remained steadfastly with him as his friend, even bravely facing dangers posed to both of them by the original Hobgoblin and a new version of the Spider-Slayer. As time passed, Peter and Mary Jane realized that they were deceiving themselves about the depth of their feelings for one another, and that they were very much in love. Peter proposed marriage to Mary Jane for the second time. She did not accept immediately. She left for Pittsburgh, where her sister, Gayle, had been sent to prison. Mary Jane helped the police arrest the real culprit, her father, Philip, who had stolen a rare manuscript. Mary Jane was reconciled with Gayle after the years of tension between them. Right afterwards Mary Jane accepted Peter's proposal.



Art by Olivier Coipel

Peter and Mary Jane were married on the front steps of New York City's City Hall, with her Uncle Spencer Watson, a judge, presiding over the ceremony. They spent their honeymoon in Cassis, France — interrupted by Puma offering Peter a job to fulfill his debt of honor — and found a new home at the Bedford Towers, a luxurious condominium apartment that Mary Jane was able to afford thanks to her highly successful modeling career.

Though happy newlyweds, the reality of being married to a super hero was far more demanding than Mary Jane had ever imagined. Villains like Venom invaded their personal lives, and Mary Jane struggled with Peter's extended absences — and the very real fear that one day, Peter might be killed. That possibility was played out when Peter disappeared for two weeks, buried alive by Kraven the Hunter who ultimately killed himself.

Her own career presented its share of problems too, when Jonathan Caesar, a wealthy, obsessed admirer and owner of the Bedford Towers, kidnapped Mary Jane. After she escaped, the incarcerated Caesar managed to use his influence to force her out of the modeling business. Down but not out, Mary Jane found high-paying work in the daytime drama "Secret Hospital". Evicted from the Bedford Towers, they moved into May Parker's home for a time, and Mary Jane's teenage cousin Kristie moved in with them (Mary Jane took cared of Kristy when she was diagnosed and hospitalized with bulimia). Harry and Liz offered the Parkers a loft above their own home in a building they owned in Manhattan's SoHo district.

Peter's ex-girlfriend, Felicia, returned from Europe and was horrified to discover Peter had married Mary Jane. She threatened Mary Jane she would win Peter back and tormented them by dating Flash Thompson, intent on breaking his heart. However, after several awkward double-dates with the Parkers, Felicia grew to love Flash. Mary Jane and Felicia eventually reconciled during efforts to help Peter.

Whether at home or out being the social animal her soap-opera fans expected her to be, the young bride found herself increasingly alone — like a super-hero "widow". Seeking respite, Mary Jane took up — but later quit — smoking and nearly entered into an affair with smooth-talking actor Jason Jerome. Miserable and tense, Mary Jane did at least manage to reconcile with her father.

Living with the Osborns as neighbors went sour as Harry descended into madness again, psychologically tormenting Peter at every

opportunity. Though he forced Mary Jane to the top of the Brooklyn Bridge where Gwen died, he backed off, claiming he did not wish to hurt her – only her husband. Harry died after imbibing a lethal experimental Goblin formula, and Liz asked the Parkers to move out.

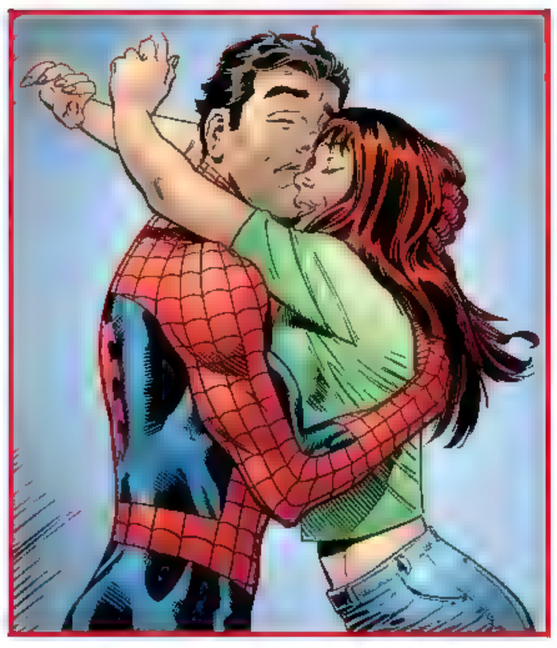
Back in Forest Hills, life started looking up when Mary Jane became pregnant, and Peter's long-lost clone, Ben Reilly, assumed the role of Spider-Man. However, the woman they believed to be Aunt May died – the real May Parker kidnapped by Norman Osborn and replaced by a genetically modified actress. The Parkers moved to Seattle to live a normal life, but were soon drawn back to New York. After Norman Osborn returned to America following Harry's death, he orchestrated the loss of her unborn child and killed Ben Reilly. Anna Watson moved in with the Parkers for a time until May was rescued and returned home. Mary Jane enrolled again at Empire State University where she befriended Gwen's cousin from England, Jill. When the Chameleon captured and unmasked Spider-Man, he assumed Peter's form and confronted Mary Jane; Mary Jane, recognizing an imposter, defeated the villain, pounding him with a baseball bat.

Mary Jane eventually resumed modeling, for which she was highly paid. Though uncomfortable with his wife's bigger paycheck, Peter soon moved into an expensive apartment with Mary Jane and Aunt May. Peter even told Mary Jane he was done being Spider-Man, once and for all. But the spider-bite ran deeper in his blood than his own resolve. With Mary Jane's busy modeling schedule already straining their relationship, the truth came out that Peter was still fighting crime as Spider-Man.

Mary Jane had never resented Peter's double life. His incredible sense of responsibility was a key factor in her love and respect for him. But she could never accept the growing feeling that Spider-Man was more important to Peter than she was. Peter's lies only served to foster that sentiment, and their marriage hit the rocks. Mary Jane faced further problems as a Stalker harassed her constantly on the phone — a secret she withheld from Peter.

With their love hanging in the balance, Mary Jane took off on a plane trip. Peter was supposed to meet her before she left, but could not get to her in time. The Stalker, on board the same flight, had other plans. When the plane exploded in mid-air, Peter at first refused to believe his wife was dead. He was eventually convinced otherwise by the weight of evidence.

But his first instincts had been correct: the Stalker, who had begun to mimic Peter after absorbing his memories through superhuman means, pulled Mary Jane from the flight and held her captive. Peter rescued Mary Jane, but she had already made up her mind: she would not return to New York and take second place to Spider-Man. The two separated, and Mary Jane moved to the West Coast.



Art by Lee Weeks

Following a painful time apart, both Peter and Mary Jane independently decided to try to reconcile. As Mary Jane flew to New York, Peter flew to Los Angeles. Each finding the other absent, they left for home. When Peter's return flight encountered an electrical storm, the pilot made an unscheduled stop in Denver — where Mary Jane's plane had touched down for a layover. The two met in the airport. Their reunion was nearly sabotaged when Doctor Doom arrived, and a Latverian resistance group launched an all-out attack in the waiting lounge. As Spider-Man aided Captain America against Doctor Doom, Mary Jane could have no clearer proof that loving Peter meant accepting the wall-crawler, too. In the aftermath of the fight, Peter told Mary Jane he needed her, that he loved her, and that he was nothing without her.

Reunited with Peter, Mary Jane focused on developing her acting skills with serious stage performances, overcoming the stereotype of being an unintelligent supermodel. During Mary Jane's absence, Aunt May had discovered Peter's secret identity. Mary Jane and May became closer, bonded by their mutual love for Peter and concern for the risks he took everyday. When the Green Goblin (Norman Osborn) manipulated Peter into freeing him from prison, he captured Mary Jane, bringing her to the top of the George Washington Bridge. Mary Jane fruitlessly defended herself with a pistol, but a brainwashed Doctor Octopus attacked the Goblin, while Spider-Man rescued his wife.

After May's home in Forest Hills was burned down by Peter's vengeful former classmate Charlie Weiderman, Mary Jane, Aunt May, and Peter moved into Stark Tower after Peter joined the Avengers. There, Mary Jane was able to witness Peter's super-hero "peer group" and appreciate their fantastic community. As Peter shared his secret identity with other heroes, Mary Jane was privileged to become friends with the Fantastic Four and the Avengers. Mary Jane was photographed once arriving home late one evening to Stark Tower. The tabloids accused her of having an affair with Tony Stark; but Tony persuaded the photographer to issue a retraction.

Mary Jane suffered as Peter was beaten and killed at the hands of Morlun, only to watch him re-emerge from his own corpse reborn. She supported Peter's decision to unmask before the world to support Tony Stark and the Superhuman Registration Act, despite the increased risk to her own safety. However, Peter eventually regretted his decision and publicly withdrew his support for the Act. Their life began to deteriorate. She and May fled Stark Tower and went into hiding at a seedy motel. She was replaced in an Off-Broadway production of *Macbeth* due to her husband's notoriety as Spider-Man, the fugitive. Brady O'Brien, one of her former bodyguards who became a SHIELD agent, attempted to force from her the location of her wanted husband or face arrest; Mary Jane stalled until Peter rescued her. Upon learning of Spider-Man's identity, the incarcerated Kingpin of Crime sent a sniper to the Parkers' motel; while Peter protected Mary Jane from the bullet, May was struck and lapsed into a coma. Calling herself Mary Reilly, Mary Jane stayed by May's bedside at the hospital. When police detectives became suspicious of May's gunshot injury, Mary Jane helped Peter steal an ambulance and transfer May to another hospital. Now both guilty of breaking the law, Peter and Mary Jane have found themselves in perhaps their most desperate situation.

SPECIAL BONUS: REPRINTING A CLASSIC TALE OF MARY JANE AND PETER'S HISTORY TOGETHER

SPIDER-MAN™

ALL MY PASTS REMEMBERED!

I'M REAL GLAD WE FINALLY GOT THIS CHANCE TO TALK, PETER.

I CAN JUST IMAGINE HOW CRAZY YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN LATELY... ESPECIALLY SINCE I TOLD YOU THAT I KNOW YOU'RE *SPIDER-MAN!**

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? HOW CAN I EVER CONVINCE *MARY JANE* THAT SHE'S WRONG ABOUT MY SECRET IDENTITY?

SHOULD I EVEN TRY?!

STAN LEE *PRESENTS*
TOM DeFALCO-- *WRITER*
RON FRENZ-- *PENCILER*
JOSEF RUBINSTEIN-- *FINISHER*
JOE ROSEN-- *LETTERER*
BOB SHAREN-- *COLORIST*
DANNY FINGEROTH-- *EDITOR*
JIM SHOOTER-- *EDITOR-IN-CHIEF*

*SEE ISSUE #257-- DANNY.

I CARE ABOUT MARY JANE. I REALLY DO! HECK, I EVEN PROPOSED TO HER ONCE.

WHAT'S THE HARM IN HER KNOWING THAT I'M SPIDER-MAN?

BUT SHE CAN BE SO FLAKEY AT TIMES! CAN I REALLY TRUST HER WITH MY GREATEST SECRET?

RELAX, PETER! I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT, AND YOU NEEDN'T WORRY.

I'M NOT THE SPACE CADET I APPEAR TO BE...

IT'S FUNNY. WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME...

...BUT WE REALLY DON'T *KNOW* EACH OTHER!

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FRIENDS, BUT WE NEVER OPEN UP TO EACH OTHER. WE DON'T SHARE...

WE'RE A GREAT PAIR, AREN'T WE?

I GUESS I NEVER QUITE LOOKED AT IT LIKE THAT.

FRIENDSHIP CARRIES SOME PRETTY BIG RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT WE'VE JUST BEEN COASTING ALONG.

I DO THAT A LOT! SOMETIMES I THINK I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE RUNNING AWAY FROM THAT KIND OF RESPONSIBILITY.

I GUESS I GET THAT FROM MY PARENTS...

DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THEM?

"THEY MET IN COLLEGE. MOM WAS A DRAMA STUDENT, AND DAD MAJORED IN MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE.

"OH, THEY WERE SO IN LOVE IN THOSE DAYS! THEY JUST COULDN'T WAIT TO GET MARRIED.

"AFTER GRADUATION, MOM WANTED TO MOVE TO NEW YORK CITY, TO TRY HER HAND AT ACTING, BUT DAD HAD OTHER IDEAS...

BE SENSIBLE, MADELINE! I'VE ALREADY BEEN OFFERED A TEACHING POSITION. IT'S ONLY A SMALL COLLEGE OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, BUT IT IS A START...

OH, PHILIP, I'D MOVE TO SIBERIA IF IT WOULD MAKE YOU HAPPY!

"THEY WERE MARRIED ABOUT EIGHTEEN MONTHS WHEN THEY HAD MY SISTER *GAYLE*...

"I WAS BORN FOUR YEARS LATER.

"AS THE YEARS PASSED, DAD BECAME A FULL PROFESSOR. HE WAS POPULAR WITH HIS STUDENTS, AND THE COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION RESPECTED HIM.

"MOM DEVOTED HER LIFE TO US KIDS

"MY PARENTS MUST HAVE LOOKED LIKE THEY HAD IT ALL...BUT DAD WASN'T SATISFIED. HE WANTED TO WRITE! TO PROVE TO THE WORLD THAT HE HAD THE SKILL AND TALENT TO BE ANOTHER FITZGERALD, A FAULKNER--!

"HE DIDN'T!

NO! *NO!* IT ISN'T COMING OUT RIGHT!

IT'S TRASH! EVERYTHING I WRITE IS TRASH!

CAN'T YOU KEEP THOSE KIDS QUIET?

MADELINE, IT'S *YOUR* FAULT I CAN'T CONCENTRATE!

HUSH, GIRLS! YOUR FATHER IS TRYING TO WORK!

BUT WE WEREN'T DOING ANYTHING, MOMMA!

I KNOW, SWEETHEART!

"DAD BEGAN SWITCHING JOBS, MOVING FROM ONE COLLEGE TO THE NEXT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR, BUT HE NEVER SEEMED TO FIND IT.

"MOM ENDURED THE CONSTANT MOVING, EVEN THOUGH SHE HATED IT.

"I WASN'T WILD ABOUT IT EITHER.

"AS A RESULT, GAYLE AND I WERE ALWAYS CHANGING SCHOOLS. IT WASN'T EASY TO MAKE FRIENDS... BUT I REALLY WANTED THE OTHER KIDS TO LIKE ME, TO NOTICE ME...

WE HAVE A NEW STUDENT... MARY JANE WATSON.

THAT'S ME -- THE ONE AND ONLY!

"I GUESS I BECAME A BIT OF A CLASS CLOWN!

"GAYLE HANDLED HER LONELINESS DIFFERENTLY. SHE BEGAN TO STUDY DANCE...

"SHE WOULD PRACTICE FOR HOURS... JUST HER AND HER MUSIC!

"MEANWHILE, THINGS CONTINUED TO GET WORSE BETWEEN MOM AND DAD...

I NEVER WANTED A HOUSE OR CHILDREN!

THEY'RE ANCHORS HOLDING ME DOWN!

"AND THEN, ONE DAY...

ENOUGH! THOSE BLOODY DANCE LESSONS ARE COSTING ME A FORTUNE!

SWAK!

PHILIP, NO--!

NOT THE CHILDREN--! DON'T TAKE YOUR FRUSTRATIONS OUT ON THEM, TOO!

"I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY FATHER HAD ACTUALLY STRUCK GAYLE! I FELT HELPLESS! ENRAGED--!

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, SO I BEGAN TO RUN...

HEY, MARY JANE! WHERE YOU GOING IN SUCH A HURRY?

YOU OKAY--? YOU LOOK LIKE SOMETHING'S WRONG!

W-WRONG--?!

ARE YOU KIDDING?

NOTHING'S *EVER* WRONG WITH MARY JANE WATSON!

"MOM FINALLY GAVE UP ON HER MARRIAGE A FEW WEEKS LATER, WHILE MY FATHER WAS BEING HONORED BY HIS COLLEGE...

MAN OF THE YEAR

"WE SLIPPED OUT OF THE HOUSE WHILE HE WAS STILL AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY. I GUESS MOM JUST COULDN'T FACE HIM ANYMORE...

"A MESSY DI-VORCE FOLLOWED! DAD SUED HER FOR DESERTION, AND THE COURT WASN'T VERY SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS HER...

"WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH MONEY, SO WE WERE FORCED TO TURN TO FAMILY FOR HELP..."

I STILL DON'T SEE WHY WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THEM IN!

THEY'RE KIN, AND THEY'VE GOT NO-WHERE ELSE TO GO!

"IT WASN'T EASY ON US, BEING SHUFFLED FROM ONE SET OF RELATIVES TO ANOTHER, BUT I TRIED TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF IT...

OH, DOLLINK! YOU'RE SO CUTE, I COULD DIIIE!

=GIGGLE= THAT'S A GREAT AUNT MARTHA, MARY JANE!

"IT'S FUNNY, BUT THERE WAS ONLY ONE RELATIVE THAT I ENJOYED VISITING. MY FATHER'S SISTER... *AUNT ANNA!* SHE ALWAYS MADE ME FEEL SO AT HOME--!"

MARY JANE, I WANT YOU TO MEET MY FRIEND MAY PARKER!

SHE HAS A NEPHEW WHO'S ONLY A YEAR OLDER THAN YOU!

"I MUST HAVE BEEN AROUND THIR-TEEN WHEN I FIRST LAID EYES ON YOU, PETER! YOU WERE JUST STARTING HIGH SCHOOL, AND YOU LOOKED SO SERIOUS! A REAL BOOKWORM!

"DO YOU REMEMBER HOW OUR AUNTS WERE ALWAYS TRYING TO GET US TOGETHER?"

"DO YOU PETER?"

"PETER--?"

HOW COULD I EVER FORGET?

CONTINUED IN *SPIDER-MAN: BIRTH OF VENOM* TPB

Using digital tools, Joe Quesada creates a layout for each page of ONE MORE DAY before penciling it completely. Here are a few examples of Joe's layouts for pages from this issue, as well as the finished art.

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FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN

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PAGE 24

FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN

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WHO ARE THEY?

AND WHO IS THE MYSTERIOUS LADY IN RED?

WHAT DEADLY SECRET DO THEY SHARE!

ONE MORE DAY
PART 3 OF 4

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WHAT'RE YOU DOING OUT HERE BY YOURSELF, KIDDO? THIS ISN'T A SAFE PLACE.

IF I TOLD YOU, WOULDN'T THAT MEAN I WAS TALKING TO A STRANGER?

WELL, YES--

AND YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO GET IN THE HABIT OF DOING THAT, WOULD YOU?

NO.

BECAUSE YOU LIKE TO PROTECT PEOPLE.

YES.

SO MAYBE IT'S TIME SOMEBODY PROTECTED *YOU*. MAYBE IT'S TIME SOMEBODY HELPED *YOU*.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S NOTHING *ANYONE* CAN DO TO HELP ME. I'M AT THE END OF MY ROPE.

HAH!

YOU HAVEN'T EVEN *SEEN* THE ROPE. BUT I CAN *SHOW* IT TO YOU. I KNOW WHERE IT *IS*.

WHAT'RE YOU--

DO YOU WANT TO SAVE HER OR *DON'T* YOU?

I--

THEN COME *ON*.

I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF *TIME.*

YOU HAVE EVEN *LESS.*

AND *HER*... THE ONE YOU'RE TRYING TO SAVE--

--SHE HAS NO TIME AT *ALL.*

SPIDER-MAN

ONE MORE DAY

PART 3

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I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD...THAT IS, WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS?

OH...THEY'RE AROUND. BUT THEY CUT ME A LOT OF SLACK BECAUSE I'M VERY SMART FOR MY AGE. I TAKE AFTER MY DAD THAT WAY.

THAT SO?

YEAH...BUT FRANKLY I'D RATHER TAKE AFTER MY MOM. SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.

WELL, I'M SURE YOU'LL GROW UP TO BE VERY BEAUTIFUL.

AND WHAT IF I *NEVER* GROW UP?

YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS? YOU'RE *SELFISH!*

WHOA, HANG ON--

YOU'RE *SELFISH* AND YOU'RE *SELF-INVOLVED* AND YOU ALWAYS PUT *YOUR* PAIN AT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE!

AS LONG AS YOU CAN GO TO SLEEP WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE, YOU DON'T CARE ***WHO ELSE*** HAS TO PAY THE PRICE FOR THAT GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!

THE WHOLE ***WORLD*** HAS TO ANSWER FOR YOUR PAIN, AND YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE MAKING THE ***PAIN*** BIG MAKES ***YOU*** BIG, MAKES YOUR ***REVENGE*** BIG, MAKES YOU ***FEEL*** BIG.

THOSE ARE AWFULLY BIG IDEAS FOR A KID.

NEVER MIND. YOU'RE AN IDIOT. YOU'RE JUST WHAT EVERYBODY ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ANYTHING, THAT'S NOT WHY I'M HERE...I SHOULD JUST TAKE YOU TO THE NEXT STEP AND LET IT GO.

IT'S TIME FOR ME TO LET ***EVERYTHING*** GO.

EVERYTHING....

WAIT...YOU SHOULDN'T GO DOWN THAT ALLEY, IT'S NOT SAFE!

WAIT!

CAN I HELP YOU?

THERE WAS A GIRL JUST HERE--

OH, YEAH, HER. THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS. ONE MINUTE SHE'S HERE, THE NEXT SHE'S GONE.

SO WHO'RE YOU?

OH, WELL, I MAINLY WORK IN SOFTWARE DESIGN AND TESTING. COMPUTER GAMES MOSTLY...FIRST PERSON SHOOTERS,SPACE COMBAT GAMES, SUPER HERO STUFF.

YEAH, KIND OF FELL INTO THAT RIGHT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.

WELL, THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT MUST BE KIND OF A FUN JOB.

YOU KNOW WHY GUYS LIKE ME GET INTO GAMES LIKE THAT?

BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING MISSING. WE LOOK AROUND AT A WORLD WHERE THERE USED TO BE A CHANCE OF BEING A HERO, OF BEING IMPORTANT...AND IT'S JUST NOT THERE THE WAY IT USED TO BE.

YOU CAN'T JUST PICK UP A GUN AND BECOME A GUNFIGHTER, OR GO OFF AND EXPLORE FOR A NEW WORLD, OR PULL A SWORD OUT OF A STONE, OR RESCUE A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS, OR--

SO WE PLAY *GAMES* AND WE READ *BOOKS* BECAUSE THE WORLD WE GOT ISN'T THE WORLD WE THOUGHT WE WERE *SUPPOSED* TO GET, THE WORLD WE THOUGHT WE'D BEEN *PROMISED* BY *SOME*BODY.

BECAUSE THINGS DIDN'T TURN OUT THE WAY THEY WERE *SUPPOSED* TO. SO WE GO SOMEPLACE ELSE.

BUT THOSE PLACES DON'T REALLY EXIST.

YEAH, WELL, NOTHING'S PERFECT, RIGHT?

IF I COULD *DO* ANY OF THOSE THINGS IN REAL LIFE, REALLY *BE* THOSE THINGS, A *HERO*, SOMEBODY WHO COULD CHANGE THE WORLD, SAVE LIVES--

--I GUESS I'D BE THE HAPPIEST GUY ON EARTH. I'D NEVER *ASK* FOR ANYTHING ELSE. WOULDN'T *NEED* ANYTHING ELSE.

I'D BE GRATEFUL.

BECAUSE THE REST OF THE WORLD NEVER *GETS* THAT CHANCE.

YEAH, WELL, I...

...THIS ISN'T GOING TO GET ME ANY CLOSER TO FINDING THAT LITTLE GIRL BEFORE SHE GETS IN TROUBLE AND--

EXCUSE ME--

--I THINK I SAW THE PERSON YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.

GET IN, I'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT.

QUITE A RIDE YOU'VE GOT HERE. ANY GADGETS YOU *DON'T* HAVE IN THIS THING?

WARP DRIVE.

MY MECHANICS ARE PUTTING IT IN ON FRIDAY, WHILE I'M IN THE OFFICE.

WOULD YOU LIKE A DRINK?

NO, THANKS...IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T DRINK, IT'S JUST THAT AS A RULE I CHOOSE NOT TO.

YEP, I USED TO BE THE SAME WAY.

FUNNY, WHERE OUR CHOICES BRING US, ISN'T IT?

I CAME FROM THIS PART OF TOWN. WENT TO SCHOOL NOT FAR FROM HERE. GOT BEAT UP PRACTICALLY EVERY DAY BY OTHER, BIGGER KIDS.

THEY HATED ME BECAUSE I WAS SMART. BECAUSE I WASN'T *LIKE* THEM. NEVER WANTED TO *BE* THEM.

THEY GOT THE GLORY, THE GIRLS, THE APPLAUSE ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD, THE PROM QUEEN...AND I GOT THE BOOT.

THEN I STARTED INVENTING THINGS...ALL *KINDS* OF THINGS. THIRTY PATENTS BY THE TIME I WAS NINETEEN. MADE MY FIRST MILLION THAT YEAR.

AND TEN TIMES THAT THE NEXT YEAR.

AND ALL THOSE KIDS I WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL WITH? MOST OF THEM WORK FOR ME NOW, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. THE REST ARE JANITORS, OR GAS STATION ATTENDANTS, OR WORK AT THE DVD STORE.

AND THEY STILL HATE ME. BUT AT LEAST NOW I'VE GIVEN THEM A REASON.

EVEN SO--

--YOU MUST BE HAPPY NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED.

NO. NOT EVERYTHING.

THERE WAS A YOUNG WOMAN I ONCE KNEW FROM HIGH SCHOOL. BEAUTIFUL.

SHE WAS ALL I EVER REALLY WANTED.

I LOST HER.

THIS IS WHERE WE GET OFF.

WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS RIGHT DOWN HERE.

I'LL SHOW YOU. I COULD USE THE WALK.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S FUNNY?

I LIVE IN A TEN-THOUSAND-SQUARE-FOOT PENTHOUSE APARTMENT IN MANHATTAN OVERLOOKING CENTRAL PARK. I HAVE EVERY PIECE OF ART, EVERY TOY, ALL THE CDS, DVDS AND PLASMA SCREEN TVS ANYONE COULD EVER ASK FOR.

I HAVE A DOZEN WOMEN ON SPEED-DIAL WHO'LL COME OVER ANY TIME NIGHT AND DAY TO MAKE SURE I'M NOT ALONE.

I HAVE EVERYTHING I'VE EVER WANTED.

AND I'D TRADE IT ALL FOR *HER.*

FOR JUST ONE WOMAN WHO TRULY, HONESTLY LOVED ME. NOT FOR THE MONEY, NOT FOR WHAT I CAN DO...JUST FOR ME.

AND I'LL NEVER, EVER HAVE THAT.

END OF THE LINE, AT LEAST FOR ME.

SHE'S WAITING FOR YOU IN THERE.

UMM...I DON'T THINK THIS IS THE--

--RIGHT--

HELLO?

I'M RIGHT HERE.

I'VE *ALWAYS* BEEN RIGHT HERE.

UMMMMM...LISTEN...I THINK THERE'S BEEN SOME KIND OF MISTAKE.

MISTAKE? NO. NO MISTAKE. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU ALL YOUR LIFE.

SHOULDN'T THAT BE *MY* LIFE?

NOT MY LIFE AS IN *"MY LIFE"* BUT MY LIFE AS IN *"YOUR LIFE"* BUT NOT AS IN MY LIFE, IT'S--

--THE *POINT* IS, SHOULDN'T THAT BE, *"I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU ALL MY LIFE."*

I SUPPOSE THAT DEPENDS ON HOW LONG EITHER *ONE* OF US LIVES, DOESN'T IT?

YOU KNOW, EVER SINCE I WALKED INTO THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, IT'S BEEN THE MOST SURREAL--

I MEAN, I'VE HAD *DREAMS* LIKE THIS.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS *ISN'T* A DREAM?

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR WHOLE *LIFE* HASN'T BEEN A DREAM? MAYBE THIS IS WHERE YOU FINALLY WAKE UP.

YEAH, WELL, IF I WAKE UP AS J.R. EWING IN THE SHOWER--

--OR GREGOR SAMSA WAKING UP AS A COCKROACH--

--I'M GOING TO BE *REALLY* TICKED.

THERE ARE SOME CULTURES THAT BELIEVE WE HAVE DREAM SELVES, EACH AS REAL AS OUR WAKING SELVES...EACH LIVING ALTERNATE LIVES, ALTERNATE FUTURES, ALTERNATE DESTINIES...AND THAT IT'S ONLY AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE DREAMING THAT WE MEET THEM.

SORRY, NEVER BELIEVED IN THAT SORT OF THING.

THAT'S TOO BAD.

BECAUSE YOU JUST MET SOME OF THEM ON YOUR WAY HERE.

"YOU SEE, OUR DESTINIES ARE WRITTEN NOT IN HUGE BRUSH STROKES, BUT IN THE TINIEST, FINEST OF DETAILS. A MISSED CAB. A PARTY UNATTENDED. A FIELD TRIP TO A LAB.

"A SLENDER WEB IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME."

BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF WE MAKE THE TINIEST CHANGE...?

"JUST A SINGLE SENTENCE...

"...AND THE FUTURE CHANGES...

"...FOREVER."

HEY, PARKER, LOOK AT THIS.

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS?

"IN ONE REALITY, YOUR RAGE AND RESENTMENT TURN INWARD. YOU PULL AWAY FROM SOCIETY, FROM A WORLD YOU CANNOT CONTROL, THAT WILL NEVER RECOGNIZE YOUR POTENTIAL--

"--LOSING YOURSELF INSTEAD IN WORLDS YOU *CAN* CONTROL, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT REAL. AND THUS LOSE SIGHT OF YOUR OWN POTENTIAL.

"IN ANOTHER REALITY, ANOTHER SELF, YOU DIRECT THAT ANGER *OUTWARDS*, TOWARD PROVING THAT YOU HAVE *WORTH*, THAT YOU HAVE *VALUE*.

"BUT MAINLY BECAUSE YOU WANT TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO GRIND THOSE WHO LAUGHED AT YOU INTO THE GROUND.

"THE PATENTS COME, AND THE MONEY FOLLOWS. YOU'RE A BILLIONAIRE BY THE AGE OF THIRTY. YOU'VE PROVEN YOURSELF TO THE CORPORATIONS, TO WALL STREET, TO THE PRESS--

"--STILL FIGHTING SHADOWS, STILL PAYING OFF OLD RESENTMENTS, STILL THINKING *'I'LL SHOW YOU'* OF PEOPLE WHO STOPPED THINKING ABOUT YOU ***YEARS*** AGO.

PARKER INDUSTRIES

"YOU PROVE YOURSELF TO EVERYONE--

"--EXCEPT YOURSELF."

THOSE ARE ONLY TWO OUT OF AN INFINITE NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES...ALTERNATE PARKERS...THOUGH I CONFESS I FIND IT INTERESTING THAT IN NEARLY ALL OF THOSE ITERATIONS--

--YOU END UP ALONE.

YEAH? IS THAT SO?

SO IN WHICH OF THOSE ITERATIONS DO I END UP A LITTLE GIRL?

OH, THAT? THAT'S ANOTHER STORY. YOU'RE NOT READY TO HEAR THAT ONE YET, AND I'M NOT YET READY TO TELL IT.

SOON, THOUGH.

OKAY, LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE OR WHAT GAME YOU'RE PLAYING BUT I OFFICIALLY JUST STOPPED CARING. I'VE GOT IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO AND NOT A LOT OF TIME.

ACTUALLY, TIME IS ALL YOU ***HAVE.*** AND AS FOR THESE IMPORTANT THINGS--

--YOU'VE ALREADY FAILED. EVERYONE'S TOLD YOU THE SAME THING. YOUR AUNT IS GOING TO DIE AND THERE'S ***NOTHING*** YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.

BUT I CAN.

I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE HER.

MEPHISTO...

I TOLD YOU, OUR DESTINIES ARE MADE UP OF THE SMALLEST BRUSH STROKES, THE FINEST DETAILS. SOME OF THOSE DETAILS I AM NOT ALLOWED TO TOUCH. BUT OTHERS *CAN* BE TOUCHED, WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE ONE INVOLVED.

WHERE EVERYONE ELSE HAS FAILED, I CAN *GUARANTEE* THAT I CAN AND *WILL* SAVE YOUR AUNT'S LIFE.

AND IN RETURN YOU WANT MY SOUL, IS THAT IT?

YOUR SOUL? HARDLY.

I STOPPED MAKING THAT DEAL WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU *AGES* AGO. DO YOU KNOW WHAT SOMEONE DOES IN HELL WHO HAS SOLD HIS OR HER SOUL TO HELP SOMEONE ELSE?

"THEY SUFFER RIGHTEOUSLY, NOBLY, SUSTAINED THROUGH ETERNITY BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR ACTIONS SAVED SOMEONE ELSE."

AND REALLY... WHERE'S THE FUN IN *THAT*?

BESIDES, KNOWING WHAT'S TO COME THERE'S STILL A MORE THAN EVEN CHANCE I'LL GET YOUR SOUL STRAIGHT-UP, AND THAT'S A *FAR* MORE APPETIZING PROSPECT.

NO, IN CASES LIKE THIS, I TRAFFIC IN A FAR MORE ELEGANT AND SATISFYING CURRENCY THAN SOULS, MR. PARKER.

I DEAL IN THE CURRENCY OF MISERY, LOSS, DESPAIR, HOPELESSNESS, PAIN, REGRET AND SADNESS. THEY ARE AS SWEET TO ME AS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MUSIC EVER COMPOSED.

I WILL GO ANYWHERE, DO ANYTHING, FOR THE SOUND OF A SOUL IN PAIN.

YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO *ANYTHING* TO SAVE HER. IS THAT TRUE, OR WAS IT JUST A LIE?

ARE YOU OR ARE YOU NOT INTERESTED IN THE TERMS OF THE BARGAIN?

ANYTHING THAT BIG...I CAN'T ANSWER ALONE, I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SOMEONE ELSE--

BUT OF COURSE. I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

SHE'S RIGHT IN THERE. FIRST DOOR ON THE RIGHT.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?!

MJ! IT'S ME-- PETER! OPEN UP!

ALLOW ME...

KLK

I CAN'T MAKE A DECISION LIKE THAT WITHOUT TALKING TO PETER.

BUT OF COURSE. I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.

MOTEL

WELL, I'M NOTHING IF NOT EFFICIENT.

PETER, WHAT'S HAPPENING? CAN HE DO WHAT HE SAYS HE CAN DO?

ENOUGH OF THE GAMES, YOU DON'T WANT MY SOUL, SO WHAT *DO* YOU WANT?

WHAT I WANT IS GREATER THAN WHAT ONE PALTRY SOUL CAN PROVIDE ME. WHAT I WANT IS THE ONE THING IN THE UNIVERSE THAT IS TRULY GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS AND TASTIER THAN ANY SINGLE SOUL I COULD DEVOUR.

I WANT THAT WHICH GIVES YOU JOY, THAT WHICH SUSTAINS YOU IN YOUR MOMENTS OF GREATEST DESPAIR, THE SOURCE NOT OF YOUR POWER, BUT OF YOUR STRENGTH, YOUR *HAPPINESS*, YOUR *DREAMS* AND YOUR *PASSION.*

I WANT *YOUR LOVE...*

...I WANT YOUR MARRIAGE.

WELL, LET ME TELL YOU WHERE YOU CAN SHOVE YOUR OFFER--

NO, PETER, WAIT!

IF HE HAS THE POWER TO DO WHAT YOU SAY HE CAN DO, LET'S AT LEAST HEAR HIM OUT.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, MEPHISTO? WHAT ARE YOUR TERMS?

AH, YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY THE SENSIBLE ONE. I'M SO GLAD YOU ASKED.

LET'S JUST SAY THIS...

ENJOY THE WORLD AS IT IS FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN.

FOR YOU WILL ONLY HAVE IT FOR *ONE MORE DAY.*

"YOU WILL NOT CONSCIOUSLY REMEMBER THIS BARGAIN, OR THIS MOMENT, OR THE LIFE YOU LIVED TO THIS POINT. BUT THERE WILL BE A VERY SMALL PART OF YOUR SOUL THAT *WILL* REMEMBER, THAT *WILL* KNOW WHAT YOU LOST.

"AND MY JOY WILL BE IN LISTENING TO THAT PART OF YOUR SOUL SCREAMING THROUGHOUT ETERNITY.

"YOU HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT TOMORROW TO SAY YES. AT THAT INSTANT, YOU WILL EITHER LOSE YOUR MARRIAGE OR YOUR AUNT.

"EITHER WAY, THE WORLD YOU KNOW, THE WORLD YOU CARE ABOUT AND HAVE FOUGHT SO HARD TO PROTECT... WILL BE AT AN END."

To be concluded...

SKY-RIDER OF THE SPACEWAYS!

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THE POWER AND THE PRIZE!

SPECIAL BONUS: REPRINTING A CLASSIC TALE FEATURING THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF MEPHISTO!

I SENSE A STRANGE *DISTURBANCE* UPON THE WORLD WHICH MEN CALL *EARTH!*

THE WORLD WHICH HAS EVER BEEN THE MOST ABUNDANT *SPAWNING GROUND* FROM WHICH I PEOPLE MY *DOMAIN!*

IF YON *BREEDING PLACE* NOW BE THREATENED-- *MEPHISTO* MUST KNOW OF IT!

WHILE MAN REMAINS AN EDUCATED *SAVAGE*, MY RANKS OF THE DAMNED ARE *SWELLED* TO OVER-FLOWING!

THUS, I HAVE ORDAINED THAT *NOTHING* SHALL CHANGE THE UNTHINKING MASSES OF HUMANITY!

FOR, SO LONG AS THEY *REMAIN* AS HOSTILE, AS CONSUMED WITH *GREED* AND *HATRED* AS THEY ARE--

SO LONG SHALL THE ULTIMATE VICTORY BE *MINE*--ON THE DAY OF *ARMAGEDDON!*

THEN, AS THE MYSTIC *VAPORS* BRING FORTH THEIR FLICKERING IMAGERIES--

A MOUNTING *PANIC* ENGULFS THE PLANET!

MORE VAPORS!!

I MUST NOW LEARN THE *CAUSE!*

AS THE MASTER *COMMANDS--!*

THERE! THAT IS WHAT I SEEK!

A BROODING *FIGURE--* STEEPED IN *PAIN!*

HOW OFT *BEFORE* HAVE I TREMBLED IN THE PRESENCE OF SUCH AWESOME *GOODNESS...*

MARTYRS ALL, WHOM MEN THEMSELVES--IN THEIR ABYSMAL *MADNESS--* DID *FORSAKE!*

AND NOW, HE *TOO* HAS BEEN *FORSAKEN--*HE *TOO* HAS BEEN *DENIED!*

BUT, THOUGH *MORE* THAN HUMAN--HE IS *LESS* THAN DEVINE!

HE STRIKES AT EARTH IN A FIT OF *FURY* THAT BIDS FAIR TO EQUAL MY *OWN!*

BUT SOON HIS *MERCY* SHALL PREVAIL--HE WILL *RELENT*--AND THEN, WHO KNOWS WHAT MAY *TRANSPIRE?*

ONE SO *NOBLE*--POSSESSED OF SUCH GREAT *POWER*--MUST NOT WALK FREELY AMONG THOSE *MEPHISTO* WOULD EXPLOIT!

AND SO --I NOW ORDAIN THAT HE SHALL *DIE!*

I MUST PROBE HIS *PAST*--DETERMINE HIS *STRENGTH*--

AND, OF *PARAMOUNT* IMPORT--I THEN SHALL LEARN--HIS *WEAKNESS!*

THUS, *MEPHISTO* DEPARTS--

AND THE DEED BE *BEGUN!*

MOMENTS LATER, ON THE FAR-OFF PLANET OF ZENN-LA, THE LOVELY, LONELY SHALLA BAL STILL GRIEVES FOR THE LOVE SHE FEELS SHE HAS LOST FOREVER--

THOUGH ALL THE WORLD BE MINE--I AM LEFT WITH NOTHING--

FOR I HAVE LOST THE ARMS, THE LIPS, THE HEART OF NORRIN RADD!

A NEW LIFE WAS HIS, WHEN HE BECAME THE SILVER SURFER--

WHILE AN ETERNITY OF SORROW IS MINE FOREVER-MORE!

HIS LOVE FOR SHALLA BAL WAS AS GREAT AS MINE FOR HIM!

BUT, ONE FACT MUST EVER COMFORT ME--

IT IS NO FEVER THAT CHILLS YOUR BONES!

HE SACRIFICED ALL TO SAVE OUR WORLD--

CAN I DO ANY LESS?

THE CHAMBER GROWS COLD--WITH A CHILL THAT REACHES MY VERY MARROW!

CAN SOME STRANGE FEVER BE UPON ME?

--BUT THE PRESENCE OF-- MEPHISTO-- LORD OF EVIL!

I HAVE COME TO CLAIM YOU, SHALLA BAL!

NO! NO!

YOU DARE NOT DENY ME-- IF YOU VALUE THE LIFE OF-- THE SILVER SURFER!

ONLY *MINE* IS THE POWER TO BRING YOU *TOGETHER!*

REFUSE ME, AND NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU *BEHOLD* HIM!

OR, DO AS I *COMMAND,* AND ATTAIN YOUR *HEART'S DESIRE!*

MEPHISTO DOES NOT *LIE!*

I SHALL *BRING* YOU TO-- *NORRIN RADD!*

I CARE NOT *WHAT* BEFALLS ME--

--IF MY *BELOVED* MAY BE *MINE* ONCE MORE!

THEN, WOMAN-- *CLOSE YOUR EYES--!*

AND, WHEN YOU *OPEN* THEM, YOU SHALL FIND--

A *SPACE SHIP!* BUT-- *WHY?!?* SURELY YOU HAVE THE *POWER* TO TRAVERSE *ANY* DISTANCE WITH BUT A *THOUGHT!*

MY REASONS ARE MY *OWN!*

MEPHISTO MOVES IN *DEVIOUS* WAYS!

AND NOW, WE FLY TO EARTH!

EARTH--WHERE, EXACTLY AS MEPHISTO HAD PREDICTED--THE SILVER SURFER NOW RELENTS--!

I HAVE STRUCK IN ANGER--LIKE MY FOES!

THUS, I AM NO BETTER THAN THEY!

I, WHO SOUGHT TO TEACH--HAVE LEARNED INSTEAD THE WAYS OF VIOLENCE!

BUT, 'TIS NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE AMENDS!

WHAT COSMIC POWER CAN ACHIEVE--

COSMIC POWER MAY UNDO!

I NOW WITHDRAW THE SPACE-BORN FIELD!

LOOK! THE FOG--IS LIFTING!

THE CITY IS RETURNING TO NORMAL!

IT'S LIKE SOME KINDA BAD DREAM-- THAT SUDDENLY ENDED!

AND, IN HEAVILY-GUARDED DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENTS THRUOUT THE WORLD--

CONDITION BLUE! THE EMERGENCY IS LIFTED!

RE-SECURE ALL MISSILES!

NO ADMITTANCE

WHEW! I THOUGHT THIS WAS FINALLY THE BIG ONE-- FOR SURE!

BUT THEN, SUDDENLY-- UNEXPECTEDLY--

SIR!! U.F.O. APPROACHING THIS SECTOR!

--IGNORING ALL REQUESTS FOR IDENTIFICATION!

THEN WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE WAS JUST A PRELUDE--TO A NEW ATTACK!

I HAVE UNDONE ALL THAT-- WAIT!

A SPACECRAFT-- FROM THE PLANET ZENN-LA-- MY OWN HOME WORLD!

IT CANNOT BE!!

AND YET-- IT IS! IT IS!

OBSERVE, SHALLA BAL--THE FATEFUL WORLD MEN CALL--THE EARTH!

IT IS HERE THAT YOU SHALL FIND--THE SILVER SURFER!

IT IS AS MEPHISTO WISHED!

HE WAS CERTAIN TO RECOGNIZE A SPACE-CRAFT SUCH AS THIS!

I SEE HIM NOW!

HE HURTLES TOWARDS THIS VERY SHIP!

AND NOW, LET THE GRIM TABLEAU UNFOLD--!

THEY DESCEND TOO FAST--!

THE HUMANS WILL BE ALARMED!

THEY HAVE ACTIVATED THEIR DEADLY NUCLEAR DEFENSES!

AND, IN THEIR FEAR--THEIR MOUNTING PANIC--THEY WILL--NO!

IT IS TOO LATE!

NOW, ONLY I CAN SAVE THE SHIP!

THE SURFER!!

COMING AT US LIKE A ROCKET!

HE--HE'S SLOWING DOWN NOW--BUT HE ISN'T CHANGING COURSE!

TAKE COVER!

YOU MUST NOT DOWN THAT SPACECRAFT!

NO, SIR--NO CASUALTIES!

ALL HE WAS AFTER WERE OUR MISSILES--

AND HE MELTED EVERY ONE!

I--NEVER SAW--ANYTHING LIKE IT!!

BUT, NOT EVEN THE *SKY-RIDER OF THE SPACEWAYS* CAN BE *EVERYWHERE* AT ONCE!

AT THAT VERY *SECOND*, THE SPEEDING STARSHIP IS FATEFULLY *CRIPPLED* BY A HUNTER MISSILE FROM *ANOTHER* HIDDEN BASE--!

POOR, PUNY *HUMANS!*

THEY ARE SO PAINFULLY, SO PATHETICALLY *PREDICTABLE!*

AND NOW, IT IS TIME FOR *MEPHISTO* TO TAKE HIS *LEAVE*--

BUT, ONLY FOR THE *MOMENT!*

WHISH!

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER-- THE DISABLED SHIP, WITH ITS HELPLESS *PASSENGER*, COMES TO A SHATTERING *HALT* AGAINST THE SIDE OF A LONELY MOUNTAIN PEAK--

BM

FOR ALL MY *POWER*-- ALL MY *SPEED*-- I HAVE *FAILED!*

THE SPACE-CRAFT HAS BEEN *DOWNED!*

BUT *STILL* MUST I FIND IT--AND *INSPECT* IT--

FOR I MUST LEARN ITS *PURPOSE!*

AND, SO *INVUL-NERABLE* IS A HULL OF ZENN-LA *STEEL*--

THAT I MAY FIND *SURVIVORS* STILL!

BUT NOW, NO PALTRY WORDS OF *OURS* CAN DESCRIBE THE *SHOCK*, THE STUNNED *INCREDULITY* THAT FILLS THE SURFER'S SOUL, WHEN HE FINDS--

SHALLA BAL-- MY TRUE BELOVED!

SHE *LIVES!* *THANK GOD*-- SHE LIVES!

NOW LET THE SOOTHING, HEALING *COSMIC BALM* ENVELOP HER--

AND *HEAL* HER INJURED LIMBS!

BELOVED-- RISE!

WE ARE UNITED ONCE MORE!

I KNOW NOT HOW YOU FOUND ME--

BUT THIS I TRULY SWEAR--

NEVER SHALL WE PART AGAIN!

NORRIN RADD-- HEART OF MY HEART--IT IS TRULY A MIRACLE!

BUT--THERE IS NO TIME TO SPEAK OF LOVE--

DANGER MOST DEADLY-- DISASTER MOST FOUL--IS NOW UPON US!

I AM BUT A HAPLESS DECOY-- BROUGHT HERE BUT FOR ONE FEARFUL PURPOSE--

--TO DESTROY THE SILVER SURFER!

WHOSOEVER HAS REJOINED US CAN NEVER BE MY ENEMY!

I SHALL BE GRATEFUL --ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE!

NO! NO--!!

EVEN YOU CANNOT REALIZE THE EVIL THAT CONFRONTS US--!

BUT SOON HE SHALL!

MEPHISTO!

SINCE THE *DAWN OF TIME*-- SELDOM HAVE I SENSED SUCH *GOODNESS OF SOUL*-- SUCH *PURITY OF SPIRIT*-- AS I SENSE WITHIN THE *SILVER SURFER!*

ALL THAT YOU *ARE*-- ALL THAT YOU *STAND FOR*--IS *ABHORRENT* TO THE *LORD OF THE LOWER DEPTHS!*

SO LONG AS YOU *EXIST*, MEPHISTO'S *SCHEME SUPREME* WILL EVER BE IN *JEOPARDY!*

BUT, YOUR *DEMISE* MUST BE AT A PLACE OF *MY* CHOOSING-- UNDER CONDITIONS *I* SELECT!

AND, *WITH HIM*-- *SHALLA BAL!*

HE IS *VANISHED!*

THEREFORE, THE SILVER SURFER MUST DIE!

CONTINUED IN *SILVER SURFER OMNIBUS VOL. 1*

STILL ONLY 399¢

545
DEC

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

ONE MORE DAY

PART 4 OF 4

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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'NUFF SAID!

"YOU WILL NOT CONSCIOUSLY REMEMBER THIS BARGAIN, OR THIS MOMENT, OR THE LIFE YOU LIVED TO THIS POINT.

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

"BUT THERE WILL BE A VERY SMALL PART OF YOUR SOUL THAT *WILL* REMEMBER, THAT *WILL* KNOW WHAT YOU LOST.

PAPER EMPTY

NOISE COUPLET

"AND MY JOY WILL BE IN LISTENING TO THAT PART OF YOUR SOUL SCREAMING THROUGHOUT ETERNITY.

"YOU HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT TOMORROW TO SAY YES. AT THAT INSTANT, YOU WILL EITHER LOSE YOUR MARRIAGE OR YOUR AUNT.

"EITHER WAY, THE WORLD YOU KNOW...

"...THE WORLD YOU CARE ABOUT AND HAVE FOUGHT SO HARD TO PROTECT...

"...WILL BE AT AN END."

MJ?

SPIDER-MAN
ONE MORE DAY
PART 4

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI & JOE QUESADA	JOE QUESADA	DANNY MIKI	JOE QUESADA	RICHARD ISANOVE WITH DEAN WHITE	CHRIS ELIOPOULOS	DANIEL KETCHUM	AXEL ALONSO	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY
STORY	PENCILLER	INKER	INKS: PAGES 23-31	COLORISTS	LETTERER	ASST. EDITOR	EDITOR	EDITOR IN CHIEF	PUBLISHER

MJ--

SHHH...DON'T TALK FOR A MINUTE, OKAY? JUST--

-- I'LL BE OKAY, BUT JUST... DON'T TALK FOR A SECOND, PLEASE?

FIRST QUESTION. DO--

--HHUCHHH

SORRY. I'M TRYING SO HARD TO--

FIRST QUESTION. DO YOU THINK...CAN HE...MEPHISTO...REALLY DO WHAT HE SAYS HE CAN?

I DON'T.

BUT THIS IS ALL WE HAVE.

ARE YOU--

DON'T. LET ME... I HAVE TO GET THROUGH THIS IN MY OWN WAY, OKAY?

OKAY.

DON'T TOUCH ME. I'M NOT...IT'S NOT THAT I'M...I JUST...I NEED TO KEEP IT TOGETHER, AND I CAN'T IF YOU--

OKAY.

I DON'T...I'M GOING TO ASK YOU SOMETHING, PETER...I'M GOING TO BE VERY SELFISH AND I'M GOING TO ASK YOU SOMETHING, AND I DON'T...I DON'T WANT YOU TO HATE ME FOR ASKING THIS.

I COULD NEVER--

MJ--

SHHHH... SHHH...

MAY'S LED A GOOD LIFE, PETER, A LONG LIFE.

YOU'VE KEPT HER ALIVE, KEPT HER GOING, FOUGHT FOR HER EVERY MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE, ESPECIALLY THESE LAST FEW WEEKS...

...YOU'VE DONE AS MUCH AS ANYONE COULD EVER HOPE TO...YOU'VE HONORED HER AND YOU'VE LOVED HER, BUT SOONER OR LATER WE ALL...

...WE ALL DIE, PETER, IT'S WHAT WE *DO*, AND WHAT IF--

--WHAT IF THIS IS JUST HER TIME?

YOU'VE ALWAYS TRIED SO HARD TO DO THE RIGHT THING BY HER...

WHAT IF THIS TIME, THE RIGHT THING...IS LETTING GO?

YOU'RE NOT SAYING ANYTHING I HAVEN'T ALREADY THOUGHT.

IF THIS WAS A CASE OF NATURAL CAUSES, A HEART ATTACK, OLD AGE, THAT WOULD BE ONE THING.

I THINK...I THINK I COULD EVEN ACCEPT THAT.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED.

SHE GOT HIT WITH A BULLET MEANT FOR ME.

THAT WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN FIRED IF NOT FOR THE THINGS I'VE DONE.

I'M ***RESPONSIBLE***, MJ. EVEN IF I'M NOT, EVEN IF WE ARGUE ALL THE LOGICAL WAYS I'M NOT... IN MY HEART, I ***AM***. AND IF THAT'S WHAT KILLS HER--

--I COULDN'T LIVE WITH THAT, MJ. I JUST COULDN'T LIVE WITH ***MYSELF***. I'D BREAK IN TWO.

OH, WELL, THAT'S JUST GREAT--

MJ--

SO IF I SAY WE LET HER GO, THEN I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT *AND* "BREAKING YOU IN TWO"!

I'M NOT--

DON'T *DO* THAT TO ME, PETER, DON'T *PUT* ME IN THAT POSITION.

I'M *NOT*.

IF I MADE THAT DECISION ALONE, NO, I COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF. BUT IF *WE* MAKE IT, TOGETHER, THEN--

--THEN YEAH, I THINK I COULD.

THINK YOU COULD OR *KNOW* YOU COULD?

I KNOW I COULD. IF THAT'S WHAT WE DECIDE.

AND HOW LONG DO WE HAVE?

UNTIL MIDNIGHT. LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

HEY, DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN--

SHHH.

HOW ABOUT THE TIME--

PETER.

I REMEMBER ALL OF IT. EVERY LITTLE DETAIL. AND NO MATTER WHAT THAT MONSTER DOES, NOTHING WILL EVER TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME.

MJ, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

ARE WE REALLY GOING TO--

OH, GOD, PETER! OH, GOD--AHUH, HUUH.

BONG!

TELL ME EXACTLY.

HOW DOES THIS WORK?

YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY YOURSELF OVER SUCH DETAILS, MISTER PARKER, BUT SINCE YOU ASKED. WITH YOUR CONSENT, IT REALLY IS QUITE SIMPLE.

YOU TWO WILL NO LONGER BE MARRIED. BECAUSE YOU TWO WILL *NEVER HAVE BEEN* MARRIED.

IT SIMPLY NEVER HAPPENED.

WHAT? JUST LIKE THAT-- A LIFETIME ERASED?

NOT A LIFETIME, NO. YOUR MARRIAGE IS BUT A STITCH IN TIME...

...THAT I WILL *SIMPLY, PAINLESSLY...* REMOVE.

ALL ELSE WILL REMAIN THE SAME.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

YOU DON'T NEED TO. ALL YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT YOUR AUNT WILL LIVE.

BONG!

DID YOU HEAR THAT? THAT'S THE SOUND OF YOUR AUNT DYING. TIME IS NEARLY UP!

YOU DO REALIZE THAT NONE OF THIS, NOT A *STITCH* OF THIS RESOLVES *ANYTHING!*

SO YOU SAVE MAY, THEN WHAT?

SHE WAS SHOT BECAUSE HE MADE HIS IDENTITY PUBLIC, THE WORLD KNOWS HE'S SPIDER-MAN. WHAT'S TO STOP SOME OTHER LUNATIC FROM SHOOTING HER AGAIN?

LET ME EXPLAIN SOMETHING TO YOU, MRS. PARKER.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT FOR A SECOND TO ASK YOURSELVES WHY? WHY I CHOSE YOU TWO OUT OF ALL PEOPLE?

IT'S BECAUSE YOURS IS THE RAREST LOVE OF ALL.

PURE, UNCONDITIONAL AND *MADE HOLY* IN THE EYES OF *HE* WHO I HATE MOST.

A LOVE LIKE YOURS COMES ABOUT BUT ONCE IN A MILLENNIA AND TO TAKE THAT AWAY FROM *HIM...*

...TO DENY *HIM...*

...IS A VICTORY LIKE NONE OTHER IMAGINABLE.

SO IF THAT'S ALL IT TAKES, CONSIDER HIS IDENTITY FORGOTTEN.

MJ, I DON'T KNOW--

BONG!

THE ANSWER IS *YES*, YOU MONSTER!

MJ, WAIT!

HOW... EXPECTED.

WELL, THEN, WE SHOULD--

WE'RE NOT DONE YET.

YOU'RE GOING TO PUT HIS LIFE BACK JUST AS IT WAS. YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE HIM A CHANCE AT HAPPINESS.

AND WHY SHOULD I DO THAT?

BECAUSE OF WHAT I CAN OFFER YOU.

AND WHAT, PRAY TELL, MIGHT THAT BE?

MJ?

MJ, WHAT DID YOU--

ISN'T TIME TO--

BONG!

SHE'S RIGHT, TIME IS RUNNING OUT AND YET ONLY ONE OF YOU HAS AGREED TO MY TERMS.

I CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER WITH THIS. WHAT SAY YOU, MR. PARKER?

IT'S OKAY, IT'S OKAY. IT'S ALL GOING TO BE OKAY. GO ON NOW, SAVE MAY.

BE THE HERO.

BE MY HERO.

NYRAAARGH!

DO IT.

DONE!

NOW THAT OUR DEAL IS SEALED, I MUST ADMIT, I AM A BIT SURPRISED.

SURPRISED?

AS I'VE SAID, WITHIN SPECIFIC LIMITS, I HAVE THE POWER TO *CHANGE* CERTAIN THINGS.

SOMETIMES ALL IT TAKES TO CHANGE ONE *BIG* THING IS TO CHANGE ONE *LITTLE* THING...

AND TURN A *POSSIBILITY* INTO A *PROBABILITY* INTO A FACT.

THOSE YOU MET YESTERDAY WERE SUCH POSSIBILITIES.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT FIND IT *INSTRUCTIVE* TO MEET THEM.

YES, I'M SURPRISED...

SURPRISED YOU FORGOT TO ASK ABOUT ME.

I'M A POSSIBILITY YET TO *COME.*

BUT THAT'S A DISCUSSION FOR ANOTHER TIME.

OH MY GOD!!! THE LITTLE GIRL, WHO WAS THE LITTLE GIRL?

YES, THE LITTLE GIRL.

RATHER THAN BRINGING A POSSIBILITY *FORWARD*, I BROUGHT A *FACT* BACKWARD.

I'M THE CHILD YOU TWO WILL NEVER HAVE NOW THAT YOU'VE DECIDED TO SAVE THE LIFE OF YOUR AUNT.

I WOULD HAVE BEEN THE BEST OF *BOTH* OF YOU. NOW THAT YOU'VE OPTED TO SAVE YOUR AUNT...

PETER, OH MY GOD.

...I WILL NEVER BE.

BONG!

SHALL WE?

YOU SON OF A--

PETER, NO!

BONG!

JUST A FEW SECONDS MORE... LISTEN TO ME, PETER, *LISTEN* TO ME.

BONG!

I *KNOW*, IN MY HEART OF HEARTS, THAT YOU AND I WERE ALWAYS MEANT TO BE TOGETHER.

WHATEVER HE THROWS AT US, WHATEVER HE DOES, WHATEVER HE *UNDOES*, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

BONG!

BECAUSE WHATEVER HE DOES TO PULL US APART WOULD HAVE TO BE BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN WHAT *BROUGHT* US TOGETHER AND *KEPT* US TOGETHER, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED.

AND THERE'S NO POWER IN THE UNIVERSE BIG ENOUGH FOR A JOB LIKE THAT. NOT THE DEVIL, NOT GOD, NOT *ANYBODY*.

BONG!

WE'LL FIND EACH OTHER AGAIN, AND WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN, I KNOW WE WILL. AND I'M ALWAYS RIGHT ABOUT THESE THINGS, RIGHT?

BONG!

RIGHT.

I LOVE YOU, MARY JANE PARKER.

AND I LOVE YOU, PETER PARKER.

BONG!

FACE IT, TIGER...

"...YOU JUST HIT THE JACKPOT."

BONG!

=YAWN= ANOTHER UNEVENTFUL NIGHT FOR PETER PARKER. JUST LIKE I LIKE IT.

OH, MAN, *LATE!*

HOW IS IT I CAN GET TO BED EARLY AND STILL SLEEP PAST MY ALARM?

GOOD MORNING--=UHRRM= *RATHER,* GOOD AFTERNOON, TIGER!

I WISH YOU WOULD HAVE. BIG DAY TODAY.

I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO WAKE YOU, YOU'VE NEVER LOOKED MORE PEACEFUL.

BUT I'LL FORGIVE YOU 'CAUSE YOU'RE SO DARN CUTE.

MMMWHAA!

AND I'LL FORGIVE YOUR CHEEKINESS IF YOU SIT YOUR TUSH DOWN AND HAVE A DECENT BREAKFAST FOR A CHANGE.

SORRY, AUNT MAY, GOT TO GO. OW, OW, OW, HOT, HOT, *HHHHHOT!*

PETER!

NO TIMEFF TO SIFFT, AUNFFT MAY, RUNNING LAFFTE.

LATE FOR WHAT?

BIG WELCOMFF HOMFF, SURPRITH PARTY TODAY, EVERYONE'S GOING TO BE THERE. I WANFF TO GET THERE BEFORE EVERYONE YELLTH *"THURPRISE!"* THATH THE BESFF PART.

PETER PARKER!

LOVFF YOUFF!!!

SLOW DOWN, YOU MOVE TOO FAST, YOU GOTTA MAKE THE MOMENT LAST, JUST KICKIN' DOWN THE COBBLESTONES, LOOKIN' FOR FUN AND...

TOWERS

FEELIN' GROOVY! LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA!

HI, I'M HERE FOR THE PARTY!

ELEVATOR ON THE RIGHT, PUSH PENTHOUSE. YOU BETTER HURRY OR YOU'LL MISS THE "*SURPRISE*"--THAT'S THE BEST PART.

I KNOW, I KNOW.

DING!

WOW!

SWANKY DIGS.

PARKER!

'SUP, FLASH!

WHERE THE HECK HAVE YOU BEEN?!

FRANK
DEAN MARTIN
SAMMY DAVIS JR
PETER LAWFORD
JOEY BISHOP
IN THE LOUNGE
JONAH JONES
BROOKS

YOU ALMOST MISSED THE "SURPRISE," AND THAT'S THE BEST PART.

I KNOW, I KN--

YIKES, AWKWARD! THINGS STILL FROSTY WITH MJ, HUH?

YEAH, I GUESS YOU CAN SAY THAT. I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'LL EVER FORGIVE ME FOR--

SHHHHHH, EVERYBODY!

SHHHHHH, SHHHHH, QUIET, THEY'RE HERE, THEY'RE HERE!

DING!

SURPRISE!!!

ALL THIS FOR LITTLE OL' ME?

HAAAAA-RRY!

THERE THEY ARE!

WHOA!

WHO'S THAT?

COME ON, BABE, I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO ALL MY FRIENDS.

FIGURES.

WOW, MR. OSBORN, LOOK AT YOU!

WUZZUP, BOYS! I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY GIRLFRIEND, LILY. GIRLFRIEND, LILY, THE BOYS.

LILY, LILY HOLLISTER.

PETER PARKER, PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

HEY, ISN'T YOUR DAD--?

HI!

OH, HI--

CARLIE COOPER!

LILY'S BEST FRIEND SINCE HIGH SCHOOL AND THE CONSPIRATOR WHO DROVE THEM IN FROM THE AIRPORT.

HOW DO YOU KNOW HARR--?

UM, HELLO?

DING!

HELLOOOOO?

OH, SORRY. UMM, YOU WERE SAYING?

HEADS UP, KIDS!

A MAN DOESN'T LIVE IN EUROPE FOR AS LONG AS I DID AND NOT GET TO TOAST WITH HIS BEST PALS.

YOU KNOW THE WORST THING ABOUT REHAB, FELLAS?

THE PARTIES SUCK.

NAH, I'M GOOD.

SAME OL' BORING PETER. GOD, IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK!

WELL YOU KNOW WHAT THEY ALWAYS SAY, HARRY, SPEAK OF THE DEVIL AND HE APPEARS.

TO FRIENDS NEW AND OLD, AND A NEW DAY!

YES, TO FRIENDS...

...AND A BRAND NEW DAY!

A BRAND NEW DAY!

TO JMS!
FROM THE MARVEL GANG!

SPIDER-MAN:
ONE MORE DAY

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #545

PART 4 of 4

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MAY PARKER

HISTORY: May Reilly was a strikingly beautiful but naïve young woman who lived with her parents in Brooklyn during a nationwide depression. When May's father walked out, her mother raised her begrudgingly — not bothering to conceal the fact that she saw May as nothing more than an unwelcome burden.

When May was a young woman, two men vied for her affection. One was a flashy, wealthy man named Johnny Jerome; the other, a carnival barker named Ben Parker. May believed she was in love with Johnny, whom she thought offered her more promise during the time of economic hardship than did Ben. Ben warned May that Johnny was actually a criminal, but she dismissed Ben's warnings as jealous slander. One day, however, Johnny unexpectedly proposed to May, saying he wanted them to leave together right away. May heard the police on the street, and realized something was wrong. Ben stormed in, telling May that Johnny had just robbed a jewelry store, and had shot a man who tried to call for help. May then realized Johnny was indeed a criminal, and rejected his proposal. Johnny was captured by the police and convicted for murder and burglary.

May Reilly set aside her fantasies about marrying someone well-to-do financially and began to make decisions about the direction of her life. Coming to appreciate Ben Parker, and his devotion to her, May fell in love with him. She married Ben, and their life together was peaceful and happy.

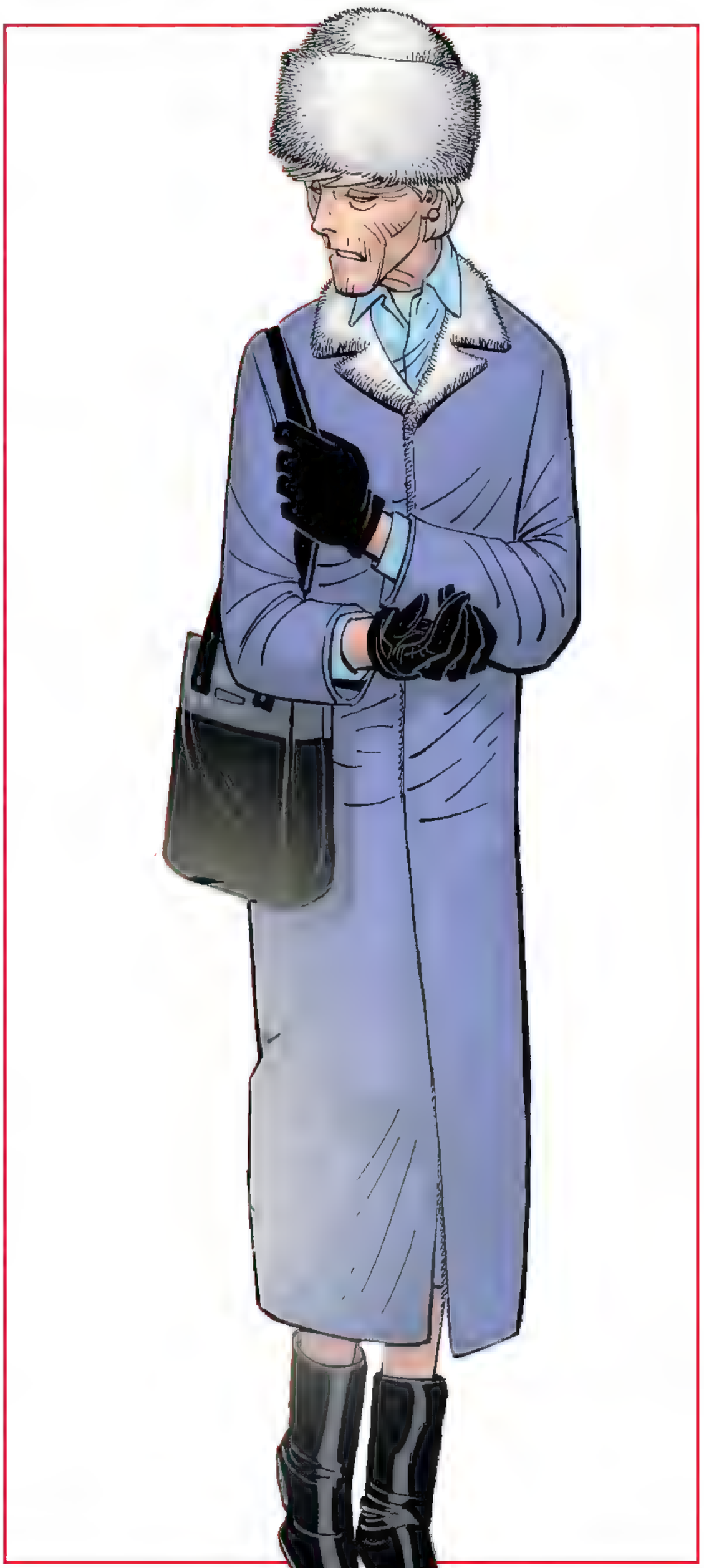
During their time dating, they were often saddled with Ben's much younger brother, Richard. So after Ben and May married, they chose to remain childless — free from the worries youngsters can bring. Richard and his wife, Mary, however, brought a son into the world named Peter.

Unexpectedly, Ben and May doted on their nephew; the young boy particularly captivated Ben. When Richard and Mary — secretly government agents — were called overseas on an assignment, May and Ben happily took Peter into their home until his parents could return. When word arrived that Richard and Mary had been killed in a plane crash in Algeria, they were designated as Peter's legal guardians. Since Richard and Mary were secret agents, Peter was temporarily held while Ben and May's backgrounds were thoroughly investigated; they were given full custody of Peter at the memorial service for Peter's parents. At first May was overwhelmed with the responsibility, even angry with Richard and Mary for dying and leaving her and Ben with the challenge of bringing up Peter at such a late stage in their life. Yet her heart could not help but be touched by how kind and thoughtful Peter grew to be. May became like an overprotective mother to sensitive Peter and together, the three became a true family.

As he matured into his teens, little did May or Ben realize that the science-loving, socially awkward Peter had, by way of a radioactive spider-bite, become the daring and colorful Spider-Man they watched on television. As Spider-Man, Peter had become an overnight sensation in the entertainment world. After a television appearance, Spider-Man saw a guard chasing a thief in the studio building. Though the guard asked Spider-Man for help, the costumed youth ignored him and allowed the burglar to get away.

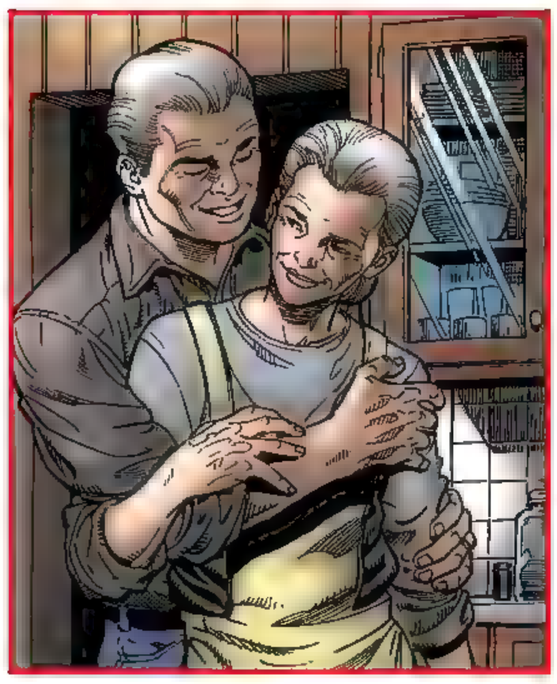
One fateful night at the Parker residence in suburban Forest Hills, Queens, that same burglar came seeking hidden assets worth millions of dollars belonging to a previous owner of the Parker home, gangster "Dutch" Mallone. While in jail, the burglar had been a cellmate of the elderly Mallone, and learned of the treasure from Mallone's mumbling while he slept. Ben and May had a small quarrel that night, and Ben left the house to take a walk, leaving the front door unlocked. In his absence, the burglar easily entered the Parker home.

REAL NAME: May Reilly Parker
ALIASES: May Morgan; formerly May Reilly
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Retired; former landlady, housewife
CITIZENSHIP: USA
PLACE OF BIRTH: Brooklyn, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: Ben Parker (husband, deceased), Albert and Claire Reilly (parents, deceased), Peter Parker (Spider-Man, nephew), Mary Jane Watson-Parker (niece-in-law), Richard and Mary Parker (brother-in-law and sister-in law, deceased), Horace Reilly (paternal uncle, deceased)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Forest Hills Public Library; formerly Gray Panthers
EDUCATION: High school graduate
FIRST APPEARANCE: Amazing Fantasy #15 (1962)



Art by John Romita Jr.

Ben returned home and discovered the burglar, who manhandled May for the exact location of the cache. When Ben furiously ordered the burglar to unhand her, the burglar panicked, fatally shot Ben, and fled to a warehouse where he was ultimately caught by Spider-Man. Before May could call for an ambulance, Ben told May he loved her and died. It was this incident which initially aggravated May Parker's weak heart condition which has caused her serious health problems over the years. Guilt-ridden for previously allowing the burglar to pass, Peter's attitude towards life and his superhuman abilities radically changed after that night, devoting his life to selfless heroics. For years afterwards, May too harbored guilt thinking had she not argued with Ben, perhaps her husband would still be alive.



Art by Sean Chen

May was left to continue her life without Ben's strength — a life further complicated by financial woes, her own ever-failing health and the strange new secrecy with which Peter conducted his affairs. To help his aunt pay the bills, including the escalating costs of her various medications, Peter took a job photographing himself as Spider-Man for the Daily Bugle. May was worried about her fragile nephew, taking pictures so close to the most dangerous of super-powered battles. For Peter, lying to his aunt became a painful — yet seemingly necessary — way of life.

Merely by being in the company of Daily Bugle secretary Betty Brant, May was kidnapped by Doctor Octopus (Otto Octavius) during the first attack of the Sinister Six. Though Betty was Doc Ock's intended target, he treated May so well she never realized the charming scientist was actually a deadly villain.

Soon after Ben's death, May became seriously ill and was hospitalized, requiring a blood transfusion. Though not a blood relative, Peter was a suitable match for May; after a moment of hesitation, uncertain what his radioactive blood would do to his aunt, Peter agreed to give May the transfusion. May was restored to health, and recuperated in Florida. Sometime later, the radioactivity in her bloodstream began to kill May. Aided by Dr. Curt Connors, Peter overcame many obstacles through the underwater headquarters of Doctor Octopus in order to deliver a serum, ISO-36, which stopped her blood from deteriorating, and saved her life.

For a long time, May's neighbor and best friend, Anna Watson, conspired with May to introduce Anna's niece, Mary Jane Watson, to Peter, but both teenagers resisted. Finally, Peter could put off meeting Mary Jane no longer, and was attracted to her at first sight. Thus began the courtship of Peter and Mary Jane.

Peter greatly reduced his need to deceive his aunt when he relocated to an apartment in Manhattan, while Anna Watson moved in with May. Though Peter and May now lived farther apart, many of Spider-Man's battles still took place dangerously close to May. The wall-crawler's web seemed to be inextricably woven into May's life. The Beetle (Abner Jenkins) took May as a random hostage, and Spider-Man again rescued her.

Just when life had begun to quiet down, May inherited a Canadian island that was the site of a uranium mine and small commercial reactor. Doctor Octopus charmed May into a sudden wedding, with the aim of acquiring the island's valuable atomic resources for his own nefarious ends. But the intervention of Hammerhead resulted in the destruction of the island and the apparent death of May's groom-to-be. Later, the Green Goblin (Harry Osborn) captured a confused May after he uncovered Spider-Man's secret identity, but May was rescued unharmed, none the wiser as to her nephew's exploits.

The shock of seeing the apparent return of Peter's murdered girlfriend, Gwen Stacy (actually a clone created by Professor Miles Warren, the Jackal) sent May back to the hospital. There she was confronted by the Scorpion (Mac Gargan) whom the Jackal, knowing Spider-Man's identity, directed to May; May indignantly scolded the Scorpion after Spider-Man defeated him. While Peter and Mary Jane grew closer than ever during this time, the apparent return of "Gwen" derailed their romance. May supported Mary Jane, encouraging her to fight for her man, much the way May had to be assertive while dating shy Ben Parker to bring about their engagement. Mary Jane, however, later rejected Peter when he proposed to her, and moved to Florida.

Despite her nagging ill health, May maintained an iron will. However, while taking part in a rally at City Hall with senior citizen activist group, the Gray Panthers, she suffered a mild heart attack and was sent to Newhope Memorial Hospital. As she continued her convalescence at the Restwell Nursing Home, the burglar who had killed her husband was freed from prison. Still seeking the treasure hidden in the Parkers' home, the burglar forced the head of the nursing home (Mysterio posing as Doctor Ludwig Rinehart) to fake Aunt May's death so she could be interrogated without the interference of her doting nephew. When Peter discovered the truth, his fury was so terrifying that the burglar died of a heart attack. More tragic was the fact that all May's suffering was over nothing: silverfish had long since eaten the treasure.

May returned to Forest Hills after recovering sufficiently and set up her home as a boarding house, taking in half a dozen paying houseguests. During this time, Peter and May's relationship hit a low point. When Peter decided to drop out of his graduate studies at Empire State University, May was so upset she stopped speaking to him for a time, but the two eventually reconciled. Among May's borders was Nathan Lubensky — a charming, wheelchair-bound gentleman she had met at the nursing home. The two were engaged until May witnessed a cold, cruel side to Nathan who caused the death of a mugger who had invaded their house after Spider-Man had already webbed the crook; May called off the wedding. Despite this, Nathan's final act proved his affection for May: he died to prevent her from becoming a hostage of the Vulture (Adrian Toomes).

Mary Jane returned to New York, and May was overjoyed when she and Peter were married. While the newlyweds lived in Manhattan, May decided to close the boarding house and live alone. She shared

Art by Mark Buckingham

a few dates with mailman Willie Lumpkin during this time. May was astonished to be reunited with Richard and Mary Parker, Peter's parents. While they were convincing to Peter, May's doubts were confirmed; they were actually replicoid duplicates, created by the Chameleon as part of Harry Osborn's complex revenge schemes.

Shortly thereafter, Peter believed he had lost his aunt when she seemingly died of old age. However, he was unaware of the depths to which the original Green Goblin, Norman Osborn, had sunk. Norman had kidnapped May and replaced her with a genetically adapted actress. While Norman lost what remained of his sanity — taking part in the mystical ceremony, the Gathering of Five — his former agent, Alison Mongrain, aided by Joseph "Robbie" Robertson, revealed May's location to Peter. Peter rescued his aunt and defeated the crazed Green Goblin, whose plans for the real May were never fully revealed.

After May returned, she struggled to regain her place in Peter's life. It was with Mary Jane's reported death (though secretly kidnapped by the mysterious "Stalker") that Peter again realized the strength he and May could give to each other. Though Mary Jane was rescued, she and Peter separated for a time; Peter relied on May to help him through the difficult times of loss — as they had helped each other many years before.

Arriving at Peter's apartment one afternoon, May finally learned the truth her nephew had so long concealed. Battered and bruised, Peter was asleep in bed with his Spider-Man costume and equipment tossed on the floor. After spending a whole day dealing with her newfound knowledge, May finally confronted Peter and began to break through a lifetime of deception. Seemingly stronger than ever, May was driven to improve Spider-Man's public image and determined to understand Peter's alter ego. With the lies behind them, May and Peter's relationship deepened like never before — reborn through a new level of honesty and trust. Mary Jane returned to Peter, and she and May were partners caring for Spider-Man.

When Norman Osborn was finally jailed, publicly revealed to be the Green Goblin, he had May captured by the Scorpion and buried in a sleep-like state as ransom for his liberation from jail. Spider-Man complied, freeing Osborn and rescuing May. More tragedy struck May as her home in Forest Hills was burned down by Charlie Weiderman, a vengeful former classmate of Peter's. While Spider-Man joined the Avengers, May was invited to move into the luxurious Stark Tower to live with Peter and Mary Jane. There she befriended and began dating Edwin Jarvis, the Avengers' butler. During a date with Edwin, her beloved husband reappeared. This Ben Parker was, in fact, taken from an alternate universe (Earth-6078) by the Hobgoblin (Robin Borne) of an alternate Earth in the year 2211. Rejected by the horrified May, Ben fled and was ultimately killed.

Art by John Romita Jr.

May supported Peter's decision to publicly unmask for the sake of Tony Stark and the Superhuman Registration Act. Peter later regretted his decision, and withdrew his support for Stark. A fugitive from the law, Peter moved into a seedy motel with May and Mary Jane. When the incarcerated Kingpin (Wilson Fisk) learned of Spider-Man's identity, he dispatched a sniper to the motel. Peter saved Mary Jane from the sniper's bullet, but May was struck instead. In a coma, May was hospitalized under her maiden name. In the same hospital as the cancer-stricken Eddie Brock (formerly Venom), May was nearly murdered by the deranged Brock. With May still in a coma, Peter discreetly offered May another transfusion of his blood, but the effort failed. Hoping to revive his aunt, Peter contacted the comatose May via the psychic Madame Web, but May seemed complacent about her fate. As the police investigated the suspicious nature of May's gunshot injury, Peter and Mary Jane were forced to break the law to move May to another hospital. After Peter violently demanded Tony Stark help pay for May's hospital bills, Stark remorsefully sent Jarvis to deliver two million dollars. Still, May's doctor offered little hope for her recovery. Desperate to prevent the death of another loved one due to his life as Spider-Man, Peter seeks any and all means to save the life of his precious aunt.

Art by Ron Garney

HEIGHT: 5'5" EYES: Blue
WEIGHT: 110 lbs. HAIR: White (formerly blonde)

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: May Parker typically possesses the normal human strength of a woman her age, height and build who engages in occasional mild exercise. She is currently in a feeble condition.

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SPECIAL WEDDING ISSUE!

GIANT-SIZED ANNUAL

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

SPECIAL BONUS: REPRINTING THE WEDDING OF PETER PARKER AND MARY JANE WATSON

SUNDAY. HIGH NOON ON CENTRE STREET. THE STEPS IN FRONT OF CITY HALL FILL WITH THE CURIOUS AND THE INVITED, WITH BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE AND PROUD RELATIVES, ALL SHARING A COMMON TRAIT:

SMILES AS BIG AS MANHATTAN ITSELF!

ANNA SHOWED ME THE GOWN, MR. SMITH. IT'S STUNNING!

THANK YOU.

THAT'S RIGHT. I TAUGHT PARKER EVERYTHING HE KNOWS!

AND I'M PLEASED AS PUNCH!

HOWEVER, AS NOON EDGES TOWARD ONE O'CLOCK...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I CALLED PETER--THERE WAS NO ANSWER.

SAME WITH MARY JANE.

DO YOU THINK THEY GOT COLD FEET?

I DON'T KNOW, DEAR. I THOUGHT PARKER WAS MADE OF STERNER STUFF.

BUT THEN...

SKREEECH

SORRY I'M LATE, TIGER! I HAD TO MAKE SURE I WAS *PERFECT* FOR YOU TODA-- TIGER?

I-I'M AFRAID PETER ISN'T HERE, DEAR.

HE...

...HE'S NOT?

GOSH, M.J., I-I'M SURE THERE'S A REASON FOR--

MARY JANE!

SORRY I'M RUNNING BEHIND!

I, UH, HAD A LITTLE TROUBLE GETTING DRESSED!

AND WALL-CRAWLING WITH MY SHOES ON!

WELL, BEING LATE IS FASHIONABLE, SO I FORGIVE YOU-- IF YOU'RE READY NOW!

LADY, I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE READY FOR ANYTHING IN MY LIFE!

THUS THE CEREMONY BEGINS, TIME-HONORED AND TRUE. DRY EYES TURN MISTY AS WORDS ARE SPOKEN, DRAWING TWO LIVES TOGETHER IN A SACRED, UNSEEN BOND. AND AT LAST, AS THE JOYOUS OCCASION NEARS ITS INEVITABLE, MAJESTIC CONCLUSION...

DO YOU, MARY JANE WATSON, TAKE THIS MAN, PETER PARKER, TO BE YOUR LAWFULLY WEDDED HUSBAND--

--TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, FOR RICHER OR FOR POORER, IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH, TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH FOR AS LONG AS YOU BOTH SHALL LIVE?

I WILL TAKE THIS MAN--THIS VERY *SPECIAL* MAN--TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN MY LIFE. BECAUSE THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'VE REALIZED HE ALREADY *IS*.

AND, DO YOU, PETER, TAKE THIS WOMAN, MARY JANE, TO BE YOUR LAWFULLY WEDDED WIFE?

SHE KNOWS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE WHAT SHE'S GETTING INTO--AND SHE *STILL* WANTS ME! HOW COULD I POSSIBLY TURN DOWN *SOMEONE* LIKE THAT?

I DO.

THEN BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME BY THE *SOVEREIGN* STATE OF NEW YORK--

"I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU HUSBAND AND WIFE!!"

AND SO, A SHORT WHILE LATER AT A NEARBY RESTAURANT, AFTER SUITABLE RICE HAS BEEN THROWN AND CONGRATULATORY KISSES HAVE BEEN LIBERALLY DISTRIBUTED.

EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY, FOLKS! THE DAILY BUGLE IS PROUD TO BE SPONSORING THIS RECEPTION!.

WHY, I'D WANT YOU TO HAVE A GOOD TIME EVEN IF THIS SHINDIG WASN'T FULLY DEDUCTIBLE UNDER THE NEW TAX LAWS!

ENJOY!

YOU'RE KIND OF SAGGING AT THE EDGES, PETE. NOT HAVING REGRETS THIS *SOON*, ARE YOU?

OF COURSE NOT, MARY JANE.

I JUST WISH I COULD AFFORD A *HONEYMOON* RIGHT NOW. I'M REALLY SORRY WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT.

AH, BUT WE *WON'T!* I JUST HAPPEN TO HAVE A PAIR OF FIRST-CLASS TICKETS TO *PARIS* HERE--AS WELL AS THE KEYS TO A PRIVATE *VILLA* IN THE 'BURBS!

WHAT? B-BUT, *HOW?*

IT WAS A WEDDING PRESENT FROM A FRIEND.

SEEMS HE WASN'T GOING TO BE USING THEM AFTER ALL...!

EPILOGUE: TWO WEEKS LATER, AS A CHECKER CAB PULLS AWAY FROM THE ENTRANCE TO 410 CHELSEA STREET...

"2134"

MMMMM. I ALWAYS DREAMED ABOUT BEING CARRIED OVER THE THRESHOLD--

-- BUT WITH ONE HAND? THAT'S CLASS!

'COURSE, DOING OTHER "NEWLYWED" THINGS, LIKE UNPACKING AND THINKING ABOUT WHAT TO FIX FOR DINNER, ARE GOING TO SEEM SORT OF MUNDANE AFTER THAT HONEYMOON WE HAD!

WOW! WHAT AN ADVENTURE!*

I KNOW. IT'S SURE MADE ME THINK A BIT. I MEAN--

*READ ALL ABOUT IT-- IN SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #7!--J.S.

-- AFTER TWO WEEKS IN THAT FABULOUS VILLA, WHAT THE HECK ARE WE DOING IN A DUMP LIKE THIS?

THAT'S EASY, TIGER. WE'RE DOING EXACTLY WHAT WE'D BE DOING ANYPLACE:

LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER!

'NUFF SAID!

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"J.M.S. had the brave heart to take an icon in new uncharted waters from the moment he took the book. All-new characters, villains, scenarios and controversy on an almost monthly basis. From the on-his-sleeve emotions of 9/11, to Aunt May and Peter finally having it out, I do believe this will be remembered as one of the great runs, not only of *Spider-Man*, but of all of comics."

- Brian Michael Bendis

"I remember when he was just "J.S." Then he got the spider book, and all of a sudden he's "J.S.M." -- Joe Spider-Man. Which is clever, but they would not cash his checks. So he settled on J.M.S. That's a true story. What's also true is that J.M.S. is the hallmark of a true professional. Dedicated. Loyal. And talented. Buckets of talent as his great run on Spidey will attest, and his current run on *Thor* is furthering the legend. My favorite thing about him? He's a friend of mine. And it doesn't get any cooler than that. Congrats, J.S.M.!

- Jeph Loeb

"There are many more eloquent quotes before mine, and I won't attempt to compete with the authors of them. I can come up with two semi-intelligent words that can be construed as a compliment of Joe's run on the *Amazing Spider-Man*: Sales tripled! Thanks, Joe."

- John Romita, Jr.

"Joe has always been capable of The Big Surprise, but his run on *Amazing Spider-Man* shows that unique flair to mature, full-blown uniqueocity. You go, Joe!."

- Harlan Ellison

"I read (almost) every Marvel comic that is published each and every week. For me, it's homework, research, and, of course, fun. I usually organize my pile of 'to read' based on what films we are currently developing and what character is undergoing a renaissance in the comics. For the past six years, Joe's run on Spidey has been the one on top. I would sit and read it the moment it landed in my inbox. Joe's creative daring is an inspiration and his imaginative storytelling transcends all forms of media. My favorite J.M.S. Spidey moment also happens to be my favorite Spidey moment period: Aunt May discovers Peter's secret. It has become my mission to put that moment up on screen. Someday we will. I promise."

- Kevin Feige
Producer/President of Marvel Studios

"In case you need reminding, Joe picking up the writing duties on *Amazing Spider-Man* was a seismic moment in modern comics. He, together with *Daredevil* writer Kevin Smith, showed Hollywood that far from slumming it in comic books, these guys were having the time of their lives. Joe not only doubled the sales of Marvel's flagship book, but has been responsible for the most radical and inventive Spider-Man stories in a generation. It's true he has a silly, virtually unpronouncable name that sensible people like to reduce to three letters, but as far as Spider-Man goes I think he's up there with Stan."

- Mark Millar

"I may have difficulty spelling his name, but there's nothing difficult about praising the terrific job that Joe Straczynski has done in his truly unforgettable eight-year run of *Spider-Man* scripting. Of course, from where I sit, an eight-year run is like -- what'samatter, you didn't have the patience to stay with it for a while?

But, despite his dawdling, for Joe to have been so inventive and creative and just plain exciting during so many issues of Spidey is beyond remarkable. His stories made the web-spinner's mag sell better than ever and his far-out themes and unexpected concepts kept the readers totally hooked for all those years. Of course, my biggest regret is that I never really got to work with the guy so it's hard for me to take any credit for what he's done.

Hey, I'd like to add a lot more compliments and laudatory remarks, which Joe certainly deserves but, as I'm sure he'll understand, it's too difficult when you're consumed by envy!"

Excelsior!
(that's "Straczynski" spelled backwards)
- Stan Lee

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